

Theology 110
*The Free Grace of GOD displayed in
the Hearts of his People.*

BEING
R E M A R K S
ON A
PAMPHLET by the Rev. Mr. PIKE,
STILED
FREE-GRACE INDEED.

IN WHICH

The AUTHOR's pretended Sufficiency of a
right Notion and *bare Belief* of the Gospel-
report unto the Salvation of its Subject, is
considered and DISPROVED; and the Fallacy
of his Arguments, repeated Self-contradictions
and Misrepresentations of Scripture
are EXPOSED.

And Likewise,

The Necessity of a Principle of Grace implanted
in the Heart, in order to saving Faith, and the
Utility of Christian Experience, are DEFENDED
against the unjust Charge of a legal and phari-
saical Spirit.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

By THOMAS WHITEWOOD; *K*

For the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power, 1 Cor. v. 20.

L O N D O N:

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The True Gospel of GOD

R. B. M. A. R. 18-2

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THE FREE
GRACE of GOD

Displayed in the

HEARTS of his PEOPLE.

DEAR SIR,

AS you expressed a desire that I would give you my thoughts on Mr. PIKE's performance, intitled, **FREE GRACE INDEED!** And I gave you some room to expect it, I have accordingly perused the same with the utmost impartiality and care, in order to come at the bottom and ground work of this new and better light, which he supposes himself to have received, and wherein he now differs from his own former judgment, and the judgment of Calvinists in general; for by the emphatical title he gives his performance, it looks as tho' he thought, that neither himself nor any other had come up to the very point before. It pleased me to find that he was unwilling to be thought either an Arminian or an Antinomian, two of the most repugnant and disgraceful characters to the pure gospel of Jesus Christ that can be; and glad

2 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

I should have been to have found that he had kept himself clear of those errors; whereas, if I am not mistaken, I have made it appear that his new light has led him into both. And as I am personally acquainted with Mr. P—— and have had the pleasure both of hearing and conversing with him. I am therefore the more concerned for him, that a man of his character, abilities, and usefulness, should be so unhappily misled, to the rendering him less useful than otherwise he might have been; that a man whom all his christian friends hoped had begun in the spirit should now think of being made perfect in the flesh. —I do not indeed suppose that he thinks thus of himself; nevertheless, Sir, the doctrine which of late he is become so great an advocate for, is no better than a doctrine of the flesh: to tell us that the simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel report is saving knowledge, and faith, sufficient to justify a soul before God, and to give him peace of conscience, is in the most simple and bare sense of the terms a fleshly doctrine, and suited to the carnal minds of unregenerated souls, and particularly those of a libertine disposition;—and as for those qualifying terms, “true belief, belief with knowledge and experience, love, fear, and obedience,” &c. &c. frequently used by him, they are so far from being a proof or confirmation of the sufficiency of a simple notion, and bare belief, that they effectually annihilate the same, since these terms radically

in the HEARTS of HIS PEOPLE. 3

cally contain, or include every thing peculiar to God's elect, and is the very faith which all Calvinists will readily subscribe to, as being both necessary and sufficient to the sinner's salvation; tho' not as the matter of his justification before God, as Mr. P—— has frequently represented it to be, particularly (p. 39) where he says, "that justification takes place by means of a report of what Christ has done; and that it is this work of Christ reported, and believed, which makes men acceptable to God, and heals the wounded conscience."—For tho' the Gospel-report, containing a declaration of a free and compleat salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, is indeed the first ground of an awakened sinner's hope, and without which, and the sinner's believing it to be true, he could have no hope, peace, or comfort to his wounded guilty conscience, and as such it may be justly called the means of healing, &c. yet it is neither the Gospel-report, with all its fulness of revealed grace and love, nor the sinner's truest, and most divine belief of the same (much less a bare belief) is the ground and cause of a sinner's acceptance with God, for the matter of his justification before him.

In what light soever we consider faith, whether as a grace implanted in the soul by the Spirit of God, or as exercised on the Lord Jesus the great saving object thereof; or whether we consider it in any or all the most genuine fruits of it, it is never represented in

4 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

the word of God, or looked upon by any Calvinist, to be the cause or matter of justification, but rather as the necessary effect and certain consequence of the soul's being already justified before God, and made acceptable by the atonement and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and is the evidence of the soul's being thus justified, according to Acts xiii. 39. *and by him all that believe are justified, &c.* and Gal. iii. 26. *for ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*; that is, faith and believing is the grand characteristick of a justified soul, and by which he appears to stand in the relation of sonship with God;—for it is not faith and believing that either justifies before God or makes us his sons, but being already justified and standing in the relation of sons with him by eternal election and special redemption, the Lord in the fulness of time sends forth his Spirit into our hearts, whereby our justification is evidenced to us, and we made to cry Abba Father; so that faith and believing is so far from being the cause and matter of justification, that it is the evidence thereof, and the happy instrument and means by which the justified sinner receives and enjoys the benefit of his justification, Rom. v. 1. *therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God*, 1 Pet. i. 8. *Yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.—I have been the more particular, Sir, on this point, because it is a very capital one, and because Mr. P—— has often

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laid too much stress upon faith and believing, even on a bare believing.

I therefore now return to his qualifying terms above-mentioned, and which I have observed effectually annihilate the sufficiency of a bare belief, &c. for unless Mr. P—— can make it appear with any propriety that the simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel-report is or can be productive of divine knowledge and spiritual experience, of evangelical love, fear, obedience, &c. &c. his notion of the justifying and saving nature of a bare belief is at once made void, and that by his own qualifying terms.—And if Mr. P—— can indeed reconcile these things together, and resolve them under one and the same idea and meaning, what then is he contending for? Wherefore all this noise, animosity, and discord? Why should he perplex the minds and disturb the peace of so many of God's dear children? How can he justify himself in rending the church of Christ, and settling himself and his party on the narrow-spirited terms of no communion but with those who will subscribe to the sufficiency of a simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel report? hereby reflecting upon all other churches and christians with an air of contempt and arrogance, saying, Stand by yourselves, we are now become more holy than you. Wherein I say is the propriety of all this, if Mr. P—— intends no more by his new-coined phrases, than what no Calvinist ever did, or ever will deny;

6 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

deny; would not this, Sir, *be striving about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers?* (2 Tim. ii. 14.)

However, it is certain that Mr. P—— intends something more (or rather something less) by his bare belief, than what Calvinists in general understand by faith and believing; and indeed, I may venture to defy Mr. P——, and his Goliath too, ever to resolve these things into one, or make it appear that a simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel-report will of itself be productive of, or be attended with the above-mention'd things; since it is more than possible that persons may have a simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel-report, to whom it may come in the letter thereof, sufficient to convince their judgment, and constrain their belief, as to the truth and propriety of the same, and yet be absolutely void and ignorant of its saving power, as in the hands of the Divine Spirit, without whose agency it will be but a dead letter, and the believer of it have but a dead and an unsaving faith; and whom we may address in language similar to that of the Apostle; (James ii. 19.) *Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well,* and that the Bible is the word of God, that all things therein recorded concerning the Lord Jesus Christ are undoubtedly true; in this also thou doest well; but remember the Devils do always thus believe and tremble. Simon Magus likewise believed all these things, and

and upon the profession of his faith was baptized, and for a-while continued with Philip wondering, &c. and yet was *in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity.*

Again, Sir, that awful representation we have in Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. is very much to the present case, in which the divine author represents it possible for persons to fall irrecoverably, notwithstanding their *having been enlightned and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, &c.* Now whatever explanation might be given to these words, sufficient to secure the glorious doctrine of the saints final perseverance, against those who hold the untrue and uncomfortable notion of falling from grace, it is sufficient to our present purpose to observe, that these things necessarily include knowledge of, and faith in, the Gospel-report, without which it is not possible they should be in any one soul: and since Mr. P—— himself will not allow of any defect in true grace, or that it is possible for persons who have once received it ever to fall finally from it, the defect must then fall upon a simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel-report. Notwithstanding those extraordinary circumstances, parallel hereto, the same author observes, (p. 10, 26.) that it is possible for persons to receive even the knowledge of the truth, and yet so sin as to be excluded all hope of salvation. To these

8 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*
these things I would farther add the case of
the foolish virgins, who had the lamp of
profession, but no oil of grace with their
lamps: and tho' I will not say that it is im-
possible for persons to make a profession of
religion, without believing the Gospel-report,
because I believe it is possible even Deists
and Atheists themselves might profess reli-
gion, and, like the Sechemites of old, be
willing to wear the badge thereof, to an-
swer some worldly interest, when, at the
same time, they believe not a word of
the Gospel as such; nevertheless, it would
be very incongruous to understand it thus
of these virgins, since the manifest design
of our Lord in the parable is to point
out the near resemblance there is between
true believers and nominal professors; they
both have the lamp of profession, arising
from, and grounded upon, the belief of the
Gospel-report: they both believe in and
wait for the Bridegroom's coming; and
it is observable, that the lamp of profes-
sion continued with these foolish virgins
even to their death; and in confidence
of the same they presume to knock for en-
trance at Heaven's gate, with a Lord, Lord,
open unto us; and with those spoken of Matt.
vii. 22. *might be ready to plead what great
things they had done for Christ, and in his
name; and yet the Lord declares he knew
them not, &c.* Now this their rejection could
not be owing to the want of a bare belief of

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the Gospel-report, since upon this was grounded the whole of their profession, therefore a bare belief, &c. is not sufficient to salvation, nor can it be attended with true peace of conscience.

Again, I cannot see any necessity for regenerating grace, or of being supernaturally taught of God, in order to the bare belief of the Gospel-report; and yet our Lord hath declared these things absolutely necessary to saving faith in him, and salvation by him. (John vi. 44, 45.) *No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and they shall be all taught of God: every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.*—And when Nicodemus came to our Lord, and professed his faith in him as a teacher come from God, our Lord invalidates this profession, by preaching to him the doctrine of regeneration, and being born of the Spirit, as necessary to the seeing and enjoying the kingdom of God, both that of the kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter: and when the apostle speaks of those who received the Lord Jesus by faith and believing, he tells us they *were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* John i. 12, 13. Now as these things appear to be absolutely necessary to true and saving faith, and so coming to the Lord Jesus Christ as to enjoy salvation by him; and as I have I think most clearly shewn that there may be a bare

10 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

believing the Gospel-report without those things, it will necessarily follow, that a bare belief, &c. is not a faith sufficient to salvation. —In a word, if a person's own experience might be admitted as any rule in this affair, as I cannot think but it might, at least to his own satisfaction, I may then mention my own; for I can well remember the time when I believed the Gospel-report as much with an act of credence as I now do, and that it had considerable, tho' but transient effects, both upon my mind and life, &c. But when the same Gospel came with a divine and efficacious power, I could then very sensibly feel the infinite difference between a Christ revealed *to* me by the letter of the word, and a Christ revealed *in* me by the Power of the Holy Ghost.—To this I might add a relation which I once heard from the pulpit, of a good woman, who being at a place of divine worship, where the Lord Jesus being the subject of the minister's discourse, the said woman was observed to continue in her seat after service was over, weeping; the minister being informed of it, he went to her, and finding her in a flood of tears, ask'd her what was the matter? and whether she had never heard Christ preach'd before? To whom she replied, Yes, Sir, but I never *felt* him before.—Now, Sir, as this relation corresponds with the general experience of God's people, it may serve to confirm the necessity of something more than a bare belief of the Gospel-

Gospel-report in the business of salvation. Nor can I believe but that Mr. P—— himself must know that there is an infinite difference betwixt a literal and a divine faith in the Gospel-report; and if so, then his pleading for the sufficiency of a bare belief must run counter to his own experience, as well as the experience of others, and the divine word in general.

Many more things relative to the insufficiency of a simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel-report might be urged, but Mr. P—— has rendered it unnecessary by his own declarations, wherein he has evidently run counter to himself, and (tho' undesignedly) given up the cause he so strenuously undertakes to defend: Some instances of which take as follow. In p. 3. speaking of the principle of grace in the heart, he observes, "that the proper principle of grace
" upon which the believer acts, by which
" he is quickened, comforted, &c. is the
" implanted word, the truth in the heart,
" the Gospel in the conscience; the know-
" ledge of Jesus Christ given to the soul by
" the Spirit, thro' the word of God: by all
" which phrases I intend for substance one
" and the same thing." Now, Sir, as this is a very comprehensive and evangelical description of regenerating grace in the principle and power of it, let me ask you, if the very reading the same doth not lead your ideas infinitely beyond what can possibly be
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12 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

done by the terms simple notion, and bare belief? And whether you can look on these phrases, and those of simple notion, and bare belief, to be synonymous, containing one and the same thing? And if we attend a little to the import of these phrases, we shall find an infinite difference between them: first, he speaks of the word as implanted, not the word in the letter, or ministration of it, nor yet the word in the bare hearing of, believing in, and professing the same; but the word implanted, that is set home with a divine power on the soul, and taking real root there; it is the truth in the heart, not in the head, notion, and bare belief of it; but in the heart, the seat and centre of all vital and life-giving principle: it is the Gospel in the conscience, that is good news and glad tidings of salvation to the awakened and sin-sensible soul, and which is not the case with every one who believe the Gospel-report, and therefore is no good and acceptable news to those: it is the knowledge of Jesus Christ given to the soul by the Spirit, which is infinitely more than the simple notion and bare belief that there is a Lord Jesus Christ, and which notion and belief is possible, without the agency of the Divine Spirit: and all this by the means of the word of God: so that the word of God, which Mr. P — sometimes calls the seed of God, and principle of grace in the heart, is here acknowledged to be only the instrument and means of these things. In p. 6. speaking

of

of the simplicity of the Gospel, he says, "The
" beauty and propriety of which cannot
" be discerned, unless it please God, by
" his Holy Spirit, through the Gospel, to
" strike a divine light into the understanding
" and Conscience." Here the Gospel, or
word of God, is again brought in, as being
only the instrument, and the Holy Spirit the
effecting cause of divine Light, Knowledge,
and Understanding in the soul ; and thus, by
the necessity of a divine agency, he effectually
makes void the sufficiency of a simple
notion, and bare belief, unless he can make it
appear that a bare belief, and the divine
agency, is one and the same thing ; or that
there cannot be a bare belief, without a di-
vine agency, and supernatural power.—In p.
29. he speaks of believing the Gospel upon a
divine evidence, hereby suggesting and al-
lowing, that there may be a believing that is
not upon a divine evidence ; and I know of
no believing that can be lower than that of
a bare believing : and in p. 43. he allows that
there may a " belief of the truth evidently
" appear, where there is not a true know-
" ledge and understanding of what is be-
" lieved."

Again, his remarks on the stony-ground
hearers, and on Simon Magus, (p. 42.) is to
the same effect, the defect of the faith : Of the
former he tells us, " Their defect lay in their
" not understanding the meaning and import-
" ance of the word they believed ; and that
" the

14 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

“ the latter, under his profession, had not
 “ received the true notion of the freeness of
 “ Divine grace.” Thus he evidently allows
 that there may be a belief of the truth as
 preached by Christ and his apostles, and yet
 such believers to come short of saving faith.
 The case of Simon Magus is a very capital
 one in this affair ; let us attend a little thereto,
 and consider the same as it is related. Now
 tho’ it should be granted (which I am not
 willing to do) that the stony-ground hearers
 did not understand the meaning and import-
 ance of what they heard and believed, yet
 it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to
 charge the same upon Simon Magus. The
 text says expressly, that Simon himself be-
 lieved also. Now the question natural to the
 words is this ; What it was that Simon be-
 lieved ? And the genuine answer must be,
 that he believed the things which Philip had
 been preaching, which was, the doctrine of
 salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ ; (Acts viii.
 5, 13.) but it is impossible for any one to
 believe in and give credit to, a relation of
 things, without understanding the meaning
 of such a relation ; and much more impos-
 sible to rejoice in the hearing of things, with-
 out knowing the meaning and importance of
 those things about which they rejoice ; and
 indeed Mr. P—— must suppose the stony-
 ground hearers to be void of common un-
 derstanding, to be elated and lifted up in
 their minds to so great a degree of joy as
 they

they were, and, at the same time, not to know the meaning and importance of what they rejoiced in: and if by the gift of God, which Simon Magus thought was to be purchased with money, we should, with Mr. P——, apply it to the gift of grace and salvation, this would be a farther confirmation that Simon did understand the importance thereof, in that he was willing to obtain it at any rate; while, at the same time, his thinking it might be bought with money was a sufficient evidence that the faith he had was not of a divine and saving nature; and Mr. P—— must know, that by how much the more counterfeits imitate things that are real, by so much the more they reflect a superior excellency on real things. Hence the word of God and judicious divines frequently signify how far persons may go in the things of God and religion, and yet want the one thing needful: witness the above-mentioned (Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. and x. 26.) and those spoken of 2 Tim. iii. 5; whereas, if a simple notion, and bare belief of the Gospel-report be sufficient to salvation, all such distinctions are vain and useless.

But, after all, perhaps it will be objected that Mr. P—— tells us that he is not fond of the phraseology simple notion, and bare belief (p. 10, 33.) consequently that my remarks on the same do not affect him: but, Sir, if he is not fond of the phrases themselves, yet it is apparent he is very fond of
that

16 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

that which is intended by them, and all along carries the idea in this lax and ambiguous channel of things; and (in p. 24.) justifies the use of the phrases; and (in p. 82.) he gives us his own definition of faith, and says, "It is nothing else but the belief of the truth." Now, Sir, can any form of words be more alike than these? If faith be nothing else but a belief, it must then be a bare belief: this is a most flagrant instance of inconsistency, to pretend a distaste of terms used by another, and, at the same time, himself substitute those of the same import, and that to justify the same thing.---And since there is a faith and believing that takes in and includes every article of truth relative to the Lord Jesus Christ, objectively considered, and the same faith and believing that has a subjective influence on the soul, it is therefore unscriptural and dangerous to assert that saving faith is nothing else but a believing; this is making no difference between a common and notional faith, and that which is special, evangelical, and divine; and which, by way of eminency, is called the faith of the operation of God, the faith of God's elect, like precious faith, &c. &c. And indeed, saving faith is something more than a believing, or it has something essentially connected with it, by which it appears, is experienced, and found to be of a saving nature: it is called a looking to Christ, and coming

coming to Christ, embracing of Christ, leaning, trusting, and depending upon him, &c.

But Mr. P——endeavours to make void the force of these things, by telling us, “ that the Scripture does not represent these actings to be faith itself, but to be the actings of a believing soul, &c.” (p. 43.) in which remark he has displayed the critick more than the divine, and, I think, greatly to the injury of divine truth; for whether these actings are called faith itself, or only the actings of a believing soul, the grand question lies here: Are they necessary to the soul’s salvation? or, Is it possible for a man to be saved by a faith that is not effectual to his looking, coming, &c. to the Lord Jesus? I wish Mr. P—— seriously to consider this; he would then see that that faith which has not these things is a dead faith, being alone, and therefore not of a saving nature: and hereby he would anticipate my answer to his next remark, (p. 44.) where he tells us, that “ these actings do not belong to faith as it justifies; and that because (he says) they cannot be exerted previous to hope and love.” In this last remark I think he is mistaken in the order of things; for I apprehend that these actings are previous to hope and love: the awakened soul, believing the Gospel-report of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, is enabled to look and come with desire and hope that he shall be saved being

18 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

encouraged thereto by the gracious invitations and promises of the Lord Jesus, to whom he looks and comes, &c. Hence we read of being saved by hope, (Rom. viii. 24.) and that our faith and hope is in God; (1 Peter, i. 21.) and if there is any propriety in the order of the apostle's words (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) *Now abideth faith, hope, charity*; it will then follow that Mr. P—— might as well tell us, that faith itself is not previous to hope and love, as to tell us that these actings are not so: but admitting that these acts of the soul are not exerted previous to hope and love, how is this a proof that they do not belong to faith? Can a man look and come to the Lord Jesus for salvation without faith? or would these acts of the soul be less valued on a supposition that they follow hope and love, than they are in preceding the same? since whenever they are exerted, they are the genuine fruit and effect of faith, and a certain confirmation of the validity and excellency of it.

And since Mr. P—— is upon the point of criticism, and is so liberal in rejecting all acts of the soul in the business of salvation, I would here ask him, Whether faith itself relative to its object, is not an act of the soul (under a divine agency)? and whether it is less valid, or to be rejected, on account of its being the soul's act? also, whether faith itself can justify (to use his own words) un-

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less it be a good and valid faith? and then, what propriety there is in rejecting those other acts of the soul, by which faith is proved to be good and valid, and which, instrumentally considered, are as necessary to salvation as the act of faith itself; and that too, whether they precede, or follow upon, hope and love? For the same Gospel that declares the Lord Jesus to be the sinners salvation, does also declare the necessity of their believing on him, looking and coming to him, in order thereto, (Mark xvi. 16. Isaiah xlv. 22. Matt. xi. 28.) with many other places. And indeed, that faith and believing which does not engage the soul's looking, coming, &c. is a dead and unsaving faith; but as it is the nature, so it is the peculiar excellency and glory of true faith, ever to lead the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, the dear object thereof, and from whom alone the believing soul fetches all his hope, comfort, and joy, objectively considered, whilst his looking, coming, &c. is the necessary and direct means of salvation, and only ground of subjective hope.

To illustrate these things, let us take a brief view of two very capital types of the Lord Jesus; the one is, that of the brazen serpent, the other the cities of refuge. The former was set up by the immediate and gracious appointment of God, in compassion to the bitten Israelites, that they might look to it and be healed: now in order to this healing it was absolutely necessary not only

20 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

to believe there was such a serpent, and that it was set up by the appointment of God, and that healing would be received by every one who looked to it; but it was as necessary that they should look to this serpent as well as thus believe in it: and it is very observable, that when our Lord applies this serpent to himself, he makes a looking to it and believing in himself synonymous (John iii. 14, 15). So that true and saving faith in Christ is a looking to him, &c. and yet, as the Israelites looking to this serpent was not the cause, but the means of their healing, so a believing in, looking and coming, &c. to the Lord Jesus, is not the cause, but the means of salvation by him. And with regard to the cities of refuge, these also were appointed by the Lord, in compassion to the manslayer, that he might flee to them, and escape the avenger of blood. And here I must again observe, that it was not sufficient that the manslayer believed there were such cities, and that they were appointed by the Lord, and that safety would attend every one who should flee to them; but it was absolutely necessary that he should also flee to these cities, and without which they could have been of no service to him, notwithstanding all his faith. Thus when the apostle had in view the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great antitype of these cities of refuge, he makes a fleeing to to him, and laying hold of him, a personal evidence of interest in, meetness for, and sub-
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jective ground of, strong consolation; not those who barely believe there is a Lord Jesus Christ, but those who have fled to him for refuge, and laid fast hold upon him, as their only object of hope, &c. (Heb. vi. 18.) But in order to invalidate this passage, Mr. P—— observes, that “this fleeing is evidently consequent upon their beholding and believing the hope set before them. (p. 47.) Be it so; it will then as evidently follow, that a fleeing to these cities, and to the Lord Jesus, became absolutely necessary to safety and salvation, and that a bare believing was not sufficient. This is the sum of what is pleaded for against Mr. P——, and is in effect allowed of by himself in the very objection, and may be well supported by a variety of similar testimonies: Thus the Lord is peace and salvation to those who take hold of his strength, *i. e.* the Lord Jesus Christ; and he is so to them who not barely believe there is such strength in God to be taken hold of, but to them who really take hold of it; (Isaiah xxvii. 5. so that, notwithstanding Mr. P——’s formidable declaration in his next words, that “if any of these consequent acts, exercises, or workings of the believer’s heart, be taken into faith as it justifies, it is then evident we are justified by works.” I say, notwithstanding this, I will be bold to assert, that all those acts of the soul before-mentioned, and pleaded for, are as necessary to salvation, and as much concerned

22 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

cerned in the soul's justification before God as faith itself : for the truth of it is, our justification before God is not by faith and believing, but by and through the Lord Jesus, the object of faith, by whom *all that believe are justified from all things, &c* (Acts xiii. 39.) not by believing, but by Christ believed on, 'tis in him alone the believing soul stands discriminately discharged from all sin and guilt, and becomes acceptable unto God. (Eph i. 6.) So that when we are said to be justified by faith, we are to understand it in an evidential and instrumental sense, as already observed, faith being a living witness in the soul of his justification, and the instrument of the soul by which he lays hold of and enjoys the benefits of a justified one ; (Rom. v. 12.) *Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* Observe, Sir, it is not said we make peace with God, but we have it, that is, in the enjoyment of it, *through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* (Rom. xv. 13.) But how it is possible for any one to be thus justified in their own consciences, and enjoy the benefits of justification, who have only believed there is a Lord Jesus Christ, and have not fled to, and laid hold of him in the sense of the word, is to me inexplicable ; whereas I can easily account for our Lord's making a believing on him, and coming to him, synonymous,

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mous, inseparable, and saving acts of the soul, instrumentally considered, (John vi. 35.) because, as no one can come to Christ in the desire of their soul after him, and salvation by him, without faith and believing; so no one can have true faith in Christ without coming to him: whereas thousands have a bare literal faith in Christ, who do not thus come unto him, but are left to perish in their incessant hungings and thirstings after carnal things.

I shall here take the opportunity of noting Mr. P——'s simile, p. 34. which simile, tho' it is not stated according to the tenor of the point in dispute, yet has that in it which amounts to the same thing under consideration: he supposeth "two persons to be under
" the same disease, and that both of them are
" told of the same free remedy; that one of
" them believing the relation applies, &c. whilst
" the other who believeth not is left in danger
" of perishing under his disease." Now tho' Mr. P—— should have supposed them both to have believed the said report, and that the latter, tho' believing, did not apply, and therefore received no benefit; yet let us observe, that even the faith of him who is supposed to believe was not sufficient to his cure, without applying to the remedy which had been reported to him, and in which he believed, for says Mr. P—— he accordingly applies. To the same purpose, (p. 71.) speaking of the invitation and promise of our Lord to the weary and heavy laden sinner, Mr. P—— " observes, that the soul being excited
" with

24 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

“ with this divine and free love of Christ he
 “ comes and finds rest.” Observe Sir, he is
 acknowledged to come as well as believe, and
 so finds rest. So that tho’ the report of an ef-
 fectual and free remedy, and our Lord’s invi-
 tation and promise to the heavy laden sinner is
 the first ground of his hope and comfort, yet
 it is so in a remote and ineffectual sense, for
 in fact it is his application to this remedy, in
 consequence of believing the truth of the re-
 port, that is the more direct and immediate
 means of cure, or of bringing peace and com-
 fort to his awakened and afflicted conscience.
 And yet as I have already observed, the hope,
 comfort and joy of the believer doth not arise
 from any of the before-mentioned acts of the
 soul upon Christ, no not from faith itself, by
 which those acts are produced, but alone from
 Christ himself, the object of his faith, and to
 whom he comes.

In p. 49. Mr. P—— hath a formidable
 chain of things by which he would invalidate
 the act of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ, in
 order (as he calls it) “ to justification and peace
 “ of conscience before God,” he thus observes,
 “ that if the act itself be necessary it will then
 “ follow, that all the qualifications requisite
 “ to the right performing this act must be
 “ necessary also, such as humility, repentance,
 “ sincerity, thankfulness, and love, &c.” And
 then infers, that “ then all these things must
 “ be brought in as previously necessary to jus-
 “ tification,” &c. and concludes, that “ if this

“ is

“ is not mixing some works of ours with
“ Christ’s righteousness in the matter of our
“ justification, I cannot imagine what is.”

Now in answer to this threatening conclusion: I cannot but observe in the first place the remarkable partiality and inconsistency of Mr. P——: it was but just now he would fain distinguish between the act of faith, and those other concomitant acts of the soul there mentioned; and would by no means admit of their being joined together, even tho’ it is impossible to suppose them separate; but now he cannot distinguish between the act of the soul in receiving, and the frame of the mind attending this act; but will have it that those qualifying circumstances necessary to the goodness of the act, must be joined with the act itself, and be upon an equal foot: great partiality and inconsistency indeed! to join the circumstantial frame of the mind, with the essential act of the soul at one time, and to separate the joint and essential acts of the soul at another; and this without any necessity or propriety; for by the same rule that humility, repentance, &c. must be joined with the act of receiving Christ, they must also be joined with the act of believing in Christ, since true faith in Christ is always attended with humility, repentance, &c. But tho’ an actual reception of Christ is attended with humility, &c. yet it doth not necessarily follow that these qualifying Circumstances must be brought in and joined with the act itself, in the bene-

26 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

fit the act is of to the receiving soul, any more than the suitable frame of mind in which a person receives his friend's bounty, or a condemned rebel his king's pardon, is to be joined with the benefit of the act itself; since it is the act of receiving that is the direct means of good, let the frame of mind be how it will; and yet, as a suitable frame of mind becomes every receiver in things temporal, much more in things spiritual and divine: so that to plead for a receiving of Christ is no way repugnant to the Gospel, and a free salvation by him, even tho' humility, &c. must and will attend such a receiving: And this is that which Mr. P——'s opponent pleads for, p. 48. And having quoted Rom. v. 17. where the apostle speaks of receiving grace and the gift of righteousness, he illustrates this receiving by a very familiar simile, by way of question. "Why," says he, should the soul's receiving the free gift of righteousness be treated as an opposition to the Gospel, any more than a beggar's receiving an alms be esteemed an affront to the generosity of the giver?" Now, tho' this simile is exceeding plain, and well adapted to the purpose, yet Mr. P—— is pleased to call it "a specimen, shewing how the Gospel may be effectually perverted and overturned, under the clearest profession and expressions of the freeness of divine grace!" and says, "It is the very same snare that Mr. S——n aims to discover

" and

“ and expose.” Accordingly Mr. P—— sets himself to work to raise a battery against it, and employs his best artillery in order to level and beat the same down; which is what I call his formidable chain of things, and to which I would now give a more direct answer. As a receiving of the Lord Jesus is Scripture-language, so we shall find it effectual in pointing out, and giving us to discern, an infinite difference between a bare believing the Gospel-report concerning the Lord Jesus, and a receiving of him according to that report, by an act of the will and affection, cordially embracing of, and having all our dependance upon him, for life and salvation; and by which act, the truth and divine nature of faith is evidenc’d in, and to the soul, and the soul favoured with the benefit of both. John i. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God:* and tho’ this receiving is explained by that of believing on Christ’s name, yet are we not to understand it of a bare crediting the truth of his Messiahship; for in this sense many of Christ’s own, *i. e.* the Jews, did thus receive him, (John xviii. 33, and other places) and yet had not received him into their affections, nor had any dependance upon him for salvation; neither did they enjoy sonship with God, being not born again, &c. So that receiving of Christ by an act of the will and affection, &c. stands under a divine propriety, notwithstanding all the improprieties by

28 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

which Mr. P—— endeavours to invalidate the same; and which improprieties arise from, and are grounded upon, a much greater evil lying at the bottom of all; and that is, his fond mistake about faith, in supposing our justification before God to be thereby, as has been already considered. Upon this account he is jealous of, and opposes every thing else that is mentioned in the business of salvation: whereas neither faith and believing, looking and coming, nor a receiving of Christ in the most humble, penitential, and affectionate manner possible, has any share in our justification before God, any more than divine love and charity, which the apostle insists upon as necessary to the being of a Christian. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3. However, notwithstanding the extraordinary pains Mr. P—— has been at, in objecting against and opposing of every thing that is thought necessary to be joined with faith, either as the genuine fruit of it, and evidence of its divine nature, or as jointly necessary in the business of salvation, instrumentally considered, if we attend to his own sentiments concerning the act of believing, we shall find him to have shot himself with his own bow; since he will not allow even that faith which he himself is pleading for to be valid and good, short of certain concomitants. In his preface, (p. 3.) speaking of the freeness of Gospel-grace, he expresses himself very emphatically,

I

tically, thus: "Yea, and I must look upon
" the welcome reception of this grace, to-
" gether with the holy fruits thereof, to be
" the true and proper proof of genuine
" christianity in heart and life." Here, Sir,
is not only a receiving allow'd of, the very
phrase he but just now objected against, but
a welcome receiving, which is a qualifying
term, and amounts in the sense thereof to
the same thing against which he levels
all his artillery; for he might as well have
said a humble reception, &c. Nor is this all,
but there must be certain holy fruits attend-
ing this welcome reception, hereby suggest-
ing, that he doth not allow of any faith in
the Gospel-report, or the most welcome re-
ception of the Gospel-report to be valid, or
a sufficient proof of genuine christianity, short
of that faith and reception which is attended
with holy fruits: and this he confirms in p.
8, where he tells us, that "if a person doth
" not bring forth the proper fruits of faith,
" he is a stranger to the grace of Christ, and
" is none of his." And what is all this less
or more than what is pleaded for by all his
opponents? Again, in p. 7. he joins faith and
its effects together, as the ground of persua-
sion of personal interest in Christ; not faith
alone, but faith and its effects, hereby putting
the effects of faith upon a level with faith it-
self. Also, in p. 30, he makes use of the
qualifying terms, "properly understood, and
" cordially believed." So then, according
to

30 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

to his above criticism, the propriety of knowledge, and the cordialness of faith, must be of equal account with the knowledge and believing themselves. And in p. 47, he tells us, that "a man who believes that Jesus is the Christ, may safely conclude he is born again, if he be conscious that his faith is productive of love to God and his people; if it overcomes the world, and induces him to obey the divine commands." But what if these things should be wanting? as Mr. P—— in the proposition suggests they may: and indeed, it is certain they are wanting in many who believe the Gospel report. Will it not then follow, that as a fruitless faith is no evidence of regeneration, so Mr. P——'s notion of the sufficiency of a bare belief is thrown to the ground, and that by his own hands?

But that which I principally intend by the above quotations, is to shew, that as they evidently contain the same things in the sense thereof, with those against which Mr. P—— has raised such a formidable chain of things; that he has hereby shot himself with his own bow, in that, through the prejudice of a misguided judgment, he at one time so warmly objects against those very things, which at other times he is so particular and explicit in asserting. Nor is this all; but as Mr. P—— has so evidently joined the fruits and effects of faith with faith itself, and represents them to be equally necessary in the business

business of grace and salvation; I wonder with what propriety he can be so liberal in asserting as he doth, (p. 48, and other places, that "if we consider any of the effects of "faith, as appearing in love and obedience "to be included in (what he calls) justifying "faith, we overturn the Gospel." Strange indeed, Sir, that those very things which he allows to be the true and proper proof of genuine christianity in heart and life, should be thought to overturn the Gospel! And equally as strange, that those proviso's which he makes the very test of his justifying faith, are not to be considered as included in this faith; and yet just before he could not distinguish between the act of receiving, and the suitable frame of mind attending the act. Thus Mr. P—— is evidently guilty of a double inconsistency; first, in regard to the truth of things; and, second, with himself: and these are circumstances which he is frequently chargeable with through his whole performance: nor is it possible for him to be otherwise, upon his plan of things: for if a bare belief of the Gospel-report be justifying faith, and sufficient to salvation, what has Mr. P—— to do with the fruits and effects thereof? since if these are brought in and join'd with the belief itself, it will then cease to be a bare belief; but if these must be brought in as a proof of the validity and goodness of faith, how can he distinguish between that which makes a good faith, and, that

32 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

that which makes a justifying faith, since it cannot be justifying, unless it be good?---And indeed, the joining the fruits and effects of faith with faith itself, doth not in the least depreciate from, but confirms and establishes its excellent nature, and that too in the business of justification, so far as faith and its effects are concerned therein ; which is not as the matter and cause of justification, but only as the evidence and means thereof. Thus Abraham is said to be justified both by works and faith, James ii. 22. *Seest thou (saith the apostle) how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ? and his faith being thus evidenced by works, it was imputed unto him for righteousness : v. 3.* that is, did not stand in the room of the righteousness of Christ, or was the matter and cause of his justification, but was a personal and visible evidence that he was a righteous man, both inherently, by a principle of divine grace, by which alone he both believ'd and work'd, and imputatively, by the righteousness of Isaac's antitype.

To the above inconsistencies, I cannot pass by what we have in p. 62, where Mr. P---, speaking of the relapsed Christians, whose consciences, through the prevalency of temptation, unbelief, or corruption, are afresh loaded with guilt, their evidences disappear, or are clouded, &c. he observes, " that nothing will or can truly or effectually relieve them, but a fresh view of the blood of
" Christ,

“Christ, as freely flowing to sinners, &c.” Very true; this alone is the ground and foundation of a recovering faith. But then, to compleat the relapsed Christian’s recovery, Mr. P—— adds, that there must be an evidence of his personal interest in this blood of Christ, and that this “arises from an obedience of faith, and those other exercises of heart, which evidence themselves to the conscience.” Thus the fruits and effects of faith consisting in the exercise or actings of the heart, together with obedience, &c. are again brought in, and by himself made jointly necessary with faith, in perfecting the recovery of the relapsed Christian, that is, in justifying to his own conscience, and to others, that he is a child of God and heir of glory, through Christ, notwithstanding his relapse, &c.—and this is all the justification that faith and its effects is capable of. But that which most of all surprises me in this quotation is, that a Calvinist’s pen should drop so great a blot as to speak of conditional promises made even to the fruits and effects of faith, for, saith Mr. P——, “to which the conditional promises are made.” This is a very flagrant mistake indeed; nor is this all, but the Holy Spirit is brought in, to set his seal to these conditional promises. In like manner, in p. 74, speaking of faith and believing, as evidencing itself to the conscience, he adds, “And to confirm this witness of our own spirits, we may be sure

34 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

“ that the Divine Spirit will not be behind-
 “ hand in joining his testimony as we pro-
 “ ceed, loving and obeying the Gospel we
 “ believe.”—Here, Sir, please to observe,
 that the Gospel is allowed to be the object of
 love and obedience, as well as of faith and
 believing, and is represented to be so as
 equally necessary: this is a circumstance that
 evidently runs counter to the sufficiency of a
 bare belief, and clashes with what he observes
 in p. 45, that “ for his opponent’s insisting
 “ upon it that approbation, and cordial love
 “ of the Gospel-truth believed, is included
 “ in justifying faith, is the same as to say
 “ flatly that we are justified by love;”
 when he himself has so manifestly joined all
 together. Nor is this all, but the witnessings
 of the Spirit are made subservient to, and de-
 pendent upon, this love and obedience; and
 the loving and obedient are supposed to have
 a witness in themselves, independent of, and
 prior to, the testimony of the Spirit. These
 things being joined with conditional promises,
 amount to full as much, and more, than that
 of joining the fruits and effects of faith with
 faith itself, even in Mr. P——’s own notion
 thereof: Also I cannot but observe what little
 cause Mr. P—— had to reflect upon his op-
 ponent, and suppose him to be criminal, for
 bringing in, and, as he calls it, ” modestly
 “ bringing in, the Divine Spirit, as the agent
 “ by which a soul evangelically receives the
 “ Lord Jesus;” p. 44, 49. when he himself

is so express in bringing in the Divine Spirit, as bearing witness to the fruits and effects of faith, as the conditions of the promises. That the Divine Spirit is the agent and sole efficient cause of an evangelical receiving of Christ, and of all the blessed fruits and effects of such a receiving, is a truth which every Calvinist would blush to deny; whilst, at the same time, the misapplication of the Spirit's agency is not to be laid to the Spirit's charge; and yet this is such a piece of Arminian modesty, that Mr. P——, with all his new light and attempts to the contrary, is most egregiously guilty of, when he represents the fruits and effects, or even faith itself, to be the condition of the promises of God, &c. and in restraining the witness of the Spirit to a progression in these things. Thus the very title of his performance is in a manner annihilated, and free grace indeed! is indeed become conditional. This is such an oversight, that charity itself cannot account for, or put a better construction upon, than by adopting the compliment he pays his opponent, p. 45, where he thus says, "Our author has only forgot himself a little here, in speaking out so plainly."

And as Mr. P—— has evidently failed in his attempts to justify the sufficiency of a bare belief of the Gospel-report; and in keeping faith separate and distinct from its genuine fruits and effects in the business of salvation, he will likewise be found to fail in his at-

36 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

tempts to invalidate the necessity of Gospel-experiences, as evidences of personal interest in the Lord Jesus; for tho' in p. 6. he tells us, that he is not against these things; yet in many other places he is very liberal in opposing of, and arguing against them. The following remarks are but a specimen of these inconsistencies: In his second letter to his Friend he gives an account of his Friend's profession of faith, p. 18 of which he approves; he draws up the following summary improvement of the same: "If the view of
 " the divine righteousness revealed in the
 " Gospel is sufficient, and made effectual by
 " the Spirit to support the hope, and so to
 " inflame the love, and so to produce experi-
 " mental and indubitable effects: What occa-
 " sion for any thing else in experience and
 " practice, to prove a special interest in Christ,
 " besides the hope, and love, and obedience,
 " &c.?" (p. 19. Now tho' this summary of things is designed to set aside the necessity of such a divine evidence of personal and special interest in the Lord Jesus, as Mr. P——'s Friend in particular, and Calvinists in general plead for; yet it evidently contains all that can be wished for and desired in their behalf; for as no view of the divine righteousness can satisfy a judicious mind short of such an one as is here mentioned; so let but the soul be indulged with such a view of his Lord as shall be sufficient and effectual to support his hope, and so to inflame his love, and

so

so to produce experimental and indubitable effects, effects every way suitable to the dignity of the divine righteousness; this will be an undoubted satisfaction to him of his special interest in his Lord, and a sufficient answer to Mr. P——'s question, What occasion for any thing else in experience and practice to prove the same? This alone is indeed sufficient; but then let it be observed that these things must be known, felt and experienced, in order to answer this end; and this Mr. P—— himself allows, yea, and adds practical obedience thereto, which is carrying things much beyond what any Calvinist would do; for they never reflect upon their obedience as any evidence of their interest, &c. the same experimental and practical evidence as above Mr. P—— speaks of, in p. 62, where he represents the knowledge of, love and obedience to Christ, to be the genuine characteristick of true believers, and a personal evidence of special interest in the promises of God; and adds, "And what
" more they want to have declared to them
" for their confirmation and consolation I cannot
" imagine, unless it be to have comfort administered to them, when the evidences and
" genuine effects of the Gospel do not appear
" upon them, or in them." And lower down in the same page he acknowledges it "to be a
" question of very great consequence to our
" peace and comfort, how a person shall be
" ascertain'd as to his interest in the blessings
" of

38 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

“ of the covenant, and the eternal safety of
 “ his precious soul?” And tells us, “ that the
 “ Scriptures give us this direct answer, by be-
 “ lieving and obeying the Gospel.” And in
 p. 66, he seems a little angry, when speak-
 ing of some persons whom he supposes to
 want an assurance of their interest and safety,
 without a constant, immediate, absolute de-
 pendance upon God in Christ, for all they
 want and expect; and so trusting, loving,
 and obeying him accordingly, he bids them
 get it where they can; “ for (says he) the
 “ word of God doth not give it you.” And
 p. 77, he calls it a presumptuous hope in
 those who are confident of their interest,
 without sufficient evidence for it.” Thus
 Mr. P— most evidently clashes with him-
 self, in that, whilst his design is to invalidate
 Gospel-experience, as a personal evidence
 of special interest in the Lord Jesus, he
 confirms its great usefulness therein in the most
 express manner; and indeed, as there are
 times and seasons when the believer is in-
 dulged with such a clear view of the divine
 righteousness, and enjoyment of the divine
 favour, as to admit of no room, so much as
 to think whether he is interested in the same;
 so there are times and seasons when the same
 believer may be under a suspension of this
 divine enjoyment, clouds and darkness may
 attend him with regard to a comfortable view
 of his interest in his Lord; yea, he may be
 ready even to question his interest, &c. And
 then

then is the time for reflex acts of the soul to take place, in looking backward and forward, on the right-hand and on the left, to find the Lord. Then a remembrance of the hill-mizar, &c. may be of special use, and then is the time for the soul to call to remembrance, and fetch in all the past instances of experienced goodness he possibly can, as so many auxiliaries, to assist in reviewing the hope of the soul in regard to its interest in the divine favour, and comfortable enjoyment of the same. "In this manner (says Mr. P——) "a Believer makes use of his experience, " &c." p. 73. And in p. 35, he observes, that "among the various methods which the " Spirit may use to recover a backslider, (or " one under cloudy circumstances) an eminent " one is, to bring to remembrance past experiences of the efficacy of the Gospel." His after-remark, "Not that his comfort may " arise from those experiences, &c." is nothing to the purpose*; since if a remembrance of past experiences be one of the Spirit's means by which a soul is recovered to a sensible enjoyment of the divine favour, &c. it is then a means to be approved of, and pleaded for; and there is no danger but that

* Tho' in p. 60 he manifestly contradicts this, where he says, that "every degree of our hope directly and absolutely depends upon what we know of Christ, as revealed in the word." Now whether Mr. P—— here intends the knowledge of judgment or of experience, he evidently makes this knowledge, and not Christ, its object, the ground of hope, &c.

40 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

that the recovered soul will make the divine favour the sole matter and ground of his joy, as I shall hereafter make appear.—And it is worthy to be observed, that under all the above dark and uncomfortable state of the soul, and its great concern to have the same removed, even then, at that very time, the faith and judgment of the soul is still fix'd and immoveable, with regard to the veracity and all-sufficiency of the divine righteousness; so that the soul is not looking after any thing as an addition to that, in order to make it more efficacious in the business of justification, &c. But what at such a time the soul wants, is a renewed sense of its personal interest in this divine righteousness, and a comfortable enjoyment of the same; saying with the Psalmist, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and restore unto me the joys of thy salvation; that I may experimentally see thy power and glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.* (Psal. iv. 6. li. 12. lxiii. 2.) And it is not a little to our purpose to observe what a happy influence a reflecting sense of the divine goodness had upon the Psalmist's mind; it satisfied his soul as with marrow and fatness, and disposed him to praise the Lord with joyful lips: When, says he, *I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night-watches; and then resolves, that because the Lord had been his help in time past, therefore in the shadow of his wings he would rejoice.* (ver. 5, 6, 7.)

And here I would take notice of the challenge which Mr. P—— gives his Friend in p. 4, where he asks him, “ If he dare to depend directly upon Christ’s work alone, “ without the consideration of something “ wrought in him, as a kind of medium to “ encourage him to trust in Christ.” Now tho’ I know not who this Friend of Mr. P——’s is, yet, from the good profession which he has made of his faith and experience (as already mentioned) I’ll venture to answer for him in the affirmative, that he doth dare, and can with the greatest propriety, depend directly and alone upon the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, for his justification, and acceptance with God, independent and absolutely free from any consideration of any thing, either wrought in him, experienced, or done by him : so that *tho’ he walk in darkness, and hath no light*, i. e. no comfortable evidence of personal interest in his Lord, arising from any quarter whatsoever, yet, even then *he can trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God*, (Isai. l. 10.) saying with holy Job, *tho’ he slay me*, in withholding the comfortable evidences of his love from me, *yet will I trust in him*, Job xiii. 15. as well knowing, that if we believe not with an appropriating and soul-comforting view of interest in the blessed Jesus, *yet he abides faithful, and cannot deny himself* ; 2 Tim. ii. 13. and as such, the soul knows there is safety in his Lord, even tho’ he may not enjoy

42 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

the comfortable evidence of that safety: So that tho' it is impossible for the soul, under the above cloudy circumstances, to put forth direct acts of assuring and soul-comforting faith upon the Lord Jesus, yet it is more than possible even for such a soul to put forth direct acts of relying and depending faith upon him; and this is a distinction I think not to be rejected.

I would now particularly consider what Mr. P—— calls an inherent principle of grace in the heart, previous to, and separate or distinct from, the true knowledge of Jesus Christ; and with which he is so mightily displeased, and absolutely denies, p. 3, 60, and other places, where he takes great pains to invalidate, both as to the principle itself, and the necessity of an experimental sense of the same, as an evidence of personal interest in the Lord Jesus. Now if by the knowledge of Christ Mr. P—— intends a bare literal and historical knowledge, a knowing him only as he is held forth in the word; then indeed there is no occasion to plead for a principle of grace in the heart, as previous or necessary to such a knowledge; since it is certain that such a knowledge is possible, without a principle of grace: And it is to be feared that many have such a knowledge of Jesus on whom it has no saving influence, and who yet trusting to it, will at last be fatally deceived by it. But if by the knowledge of Christ Mr. P—— intends what is generally

and

and for distinction-sake, called saving knowledge, as it has saving influences on the soul, engaging its faith in, desire after, dependance upon, love of, hope from, and divine joy in the Lord Jesus, as the alone Saviour, &c.— I say, if this be the knowledge Mr. P—— intends, I shall then venture to affirm that there is such a principle as mentioned above, and that such a principle is absolutely necessary to this saving knowledge of Christ; yea, that the Lord, the Spirit, the great Agent of all internal and soul-saving grace, does begin and carry on a saving work of grace in the soul, previous to, and separate from, such a knowledge of Jesus. This is evidently the case in the great work of saving conviction, which is nothing less than a divine principle of life-giving grace in the soul, whereby the dead, insensible, and unconcerned soul, is quickened, and brought to a feeling sense of his sin and misery, and filled with the utmost concern on account of the same, and made to cry out as in the greatest distress, and as having no comforting view of a Saviour: What shall I do to be saved? And as this is the beginning of a good work on the soul, so it is sometimes carrying on a great while before the soul is indulged with a believing and comforting view of the Lord Jesus: for though such an one hath often read and heard of the Lord Jesus, and believed the same to be true, and much might be said to him, to encourage his faith and

44 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

hope in him ; yet the sense he has of his sin and misery is so great, that it keeps the Lord Jesus at a distance from him, and, as it were, out of his sight ; so that the soul under these circumstances is so far from having a saving, comfortable view and knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that it is to him as tho' there was no Jesus : and yet such a convinced soul must be allowed to be under a work of grace, and in the way of salvation ; and whatever might be the means by which the above conviction is wrought in the soul, the Lord, the Spirit, is the alone Agent, and it must be called a principle of grace.—And as there is such a principle of grace in the heart, previous to, and separate from, a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, so this principle is absolutely necessary in order to this saving knowledge of him ; for without this principle of grace, the soul is spiritually blind and dead, and can see no need of a Lord Jesus, nor any excellency in him, wherefore they should desire him. So that how full soever the Gospel-revelation is of the Lord Jesus, and however clear and explicit in its glorious doctrines of grace, however well adapted in all its endearing invitations, and encouraging in all its precious promises, yet it is not, nor can be, the efficient cause of saving knowledge and faith in the Lord Jesus, but only the means thereof, as in the hands, and under the agency, of the Divine Spirit : For as it is this previous principle of grace alone that
can

can make a soul sensible and sick of sin, so it is this alone that can dispose and give the soul power to apply to the Physician for a cure; it is being taught of God by his Divine Spirit, that gives the soul a saving knowledge of Christ, and power to come to him; nor can any one come to the Son, except the Father draw him: So that the question is not whether a person dare to come to, and rely alone upon, the Lord Jesus, without a previous principle of divine grace, &c. but whether he can do it both in respect of will and power, and also in respect of hope in so doing, without such a principle; since both power to do, and hope in so doing, cometh alone from the Lord.

These things might be abundantly enlarg'd upon and confirm'd by many sacred texts; but as what I have observed is delivered in Scripture-language, this may suffice: And as Mr. P— very frequently speaks after the same manner, and tells us, that “it is the Spirit’s work to lead a soul to the freeness of the Gospel-grace,” (p. 76.) I need say no more upon this head, but only remark, that by whatsoever a person is led to the knowledge of an object, that which leads is the agent, and this leading must be previous to the knowledge itself: This might be exemplified by a variety of circumstances, but none more to the purpose than that of our Lord’s opening the eyes of the blind; the operation preceded the sight: Thus the Lord puts his hand into
2 a sinner’s

46 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

a sinner's heart before the sinner can move towards him. I therefore now proceed to consider the necessity of the soul's personal knowledge of this principle of grace in his heart, and its genuine effects on the mind, as a personal evidence of special interest in the Lord Jesus : For tho' the revelation of Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient and free Saviour, made known to sinners as such, is the only ground of an objective hope, and is sufficient both to warrant and encourage an awakened sinner's trust in him, and hope of salvation by him ; yet, as an evidence and proof of a personal and special interest in this Lord Jesus, and in order to enjoy the comfort of such an interest, the soul must be conscious of some distinguishing principle of divine implanted grace, whereby he is made to differ from those who are dead in sin, as he himself once was : And this I call a subjective hope, being a reason in the soul for the hope he has above unregenerate sinners, and which himself was destitute of whilst in his unconverted state ; and is nothing less than Christ in the soul by his Spirit, and grace, the hope of glory ; and that in consequence of the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, &c. And these things are confirmed by Mr. P——, when he says, that
“ the joy (which is the effect of a good hope)
“ of Believers, arises from a persuasion of
“ their personal interest in the great blessings
“ of the covenant, by a personal experience
“ of

“ of the work of grace on their souls :” And adds, “ and the genuine fruits of such a work ;” and brings in Mr. S—n as being of the same mind ; who says, that “ the assurance of hope arises from experience in the hearts of them that love God, and keep his commandments ;” p. 54. And in p. 56, Mr. P. allows that “ Believers may conclude their spiritual relation to God from the operation of his grace upon their souls :” And indeed, short of these things, there could be no difference between the converted and the unconverted sinner, with regard to their personal hope, &c. and as such, the free and distinguishing grace of God bestowed upon the converted soul, would, in this respect, lose its great usefulness : And as it is Arminianism in the strictest sense, to suppose that a person might obtain a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, faith and hope in him, without a principle of implanted grace ; so it sounds very odd from a Calvinist’s pen, to suggest that a consciousness of having received such a principle, will endanger a person’s depending thereupon, and drawing all his hope and joy from the same, to the rejecting of or flighting the Lord Jesus, &c. See p. 20, 21 ; in the latter of which Mr. P—— says, “ It is very certain that a professor may be as proud and self-confident, and take as much delight in the contemplation of a distinct principle of grace in his heart, as any Pharisee that ever lived :

48 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

“ lived : Upon this thought he may admire,
 “ and, I was going to say, almost adore
 “ himself because thereof.” Now supposing
 this to have been Mr. P——’s remarkable
 experience and conduct, as in his contrast he
 gives us to understand it was, p. 79, 80.
 it doth not from thence follow that it should
 be so with others, or that the doctrine of
 implanted grace must be rejected, because
 misimprov’d by some : For what doctrine is
 not liable to be abused ? However, I cannot
 but observe, that in these remarkable words,
 and also in the above paragraph, Mr. P——
 not only runs counter to what he but just now
 acknowledged, “ that Believers may conclude
 “ their spiritual relation to God, from the
 “ operation of his grace upon their souls,
 “ &c.” but in both these paragraphs he mis-
 leads his readers, in turning them from the
 view of a true Believer, one in the possession
 of a real-principle of grace, to that of a
 mere Professor, or one who of all men is
 in the greatest danger of being proud and
 self-confident ; whereas the true Believer, be-
 ing under the influence of divine grace, will
 not, nor can he indulge any thing of this na-
 ture ; I’ll venture to say it is impossible ; for
 such is the nature of implanted grace, that as it
 comes from the Divine Father, thro’ the Di-
 vine Son, under the agency of the Divine Spi-
 rit, it naturally, and therefore of necessity, at-
 tracts and engages the faith, hope and joy of
 the

the soul, to centre in these Divine Persons alone : And it is by this implanted principle of grace, that each person in the Blessed Trinity secures to himself his personal esteem and honour in and from the soul, as they are respectively engaged in the soul's salvation : And by how much the more Believers are conscious of having received such a principle, by so much the more will they be disposed to admiration and wonder, thanksgiving and praise ; saying with Judas (not Iscariot) *How is it, Lord, that thou wilt (and doth) manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world ?* John xiv. 22. and with the apostles, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* Ephes. i. 3. So that tho' the soul cannot but rejoice in the divine bestowment, as it is the fruit of divine love, and a sure evidence of his personal interest in the Lord Jesus ; yet neither the principle itself, nor the soul's consciousness of having received it, has the least tendency to lead him from the Lord, but are both subservient to, and the only principle that can dispose him to rejoice in the Lord alone, having no confidence in the flesh.

These things thus considered, furnish us with an answer to the question Mr. P—— puts to his Friend, and with which he seems to triumph over him, p. 18, 19. where he asks him, that “ if he can

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“ draw

50 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

“ draw nigh to God with a humble and fi-
“ ducial confidence, eyeing the everlasting
“ righteousness and compleat atonement of
“ the Lord Jesus Christ, as the sole ground
“ of his hope, even when this principle
“ is utterly out of sight; then what occa-
“ sion for laying so great stress upon the
“ doctrine and consciousness of a distinct pre-
“ vious principle; since a view of the com-
“ pleat work of Christ is own'd sufficient to
“ support this humble confidence, when
“ every other encouragement is out of sight?”

Now, Sir, the answer to this supposed un-
answerable question is ready; first, it is need-
ful that we might distinguish between justi-
fication and sanctification, between a right-
eousness wrought out for, and imputed to,
and a righteousness implanted in the soul;
and represent the latter to be a personal evi-
dence of special interest in the former; also
that we might display the excellency of
distinguishing grace, in and upon the soul,
(whereby it is influenced) to honour the
Redeemer as the object of a divine evangeli-
cal faith, hope and joy, in opposition to that
which is merely literal and superficial: In a
word, that we might abide by and maintain
the glorious doctrine of salvation alone by
grace; by the grace of the Father in choo-
sing, by the grace of the Son in redeeming,
and by the grace of the Holy Spirit in call-
ing, renewing and sanctifying the soul, and
so making him meet for glory; for this di-

vine doctrine cannot be fully maintained, without owning the necessity of an implanted principle of grace, in the sense above considered: Nor can it be maintained experimentally, but by a consciousness of having received such a principle. I would also observe, that Mr. P—— might with as much propriety have argued thus; that since the atonement and righteousness of Christ is allowed to be sufficient to justify the soul before God, and give him an acceptance in the divine favour: What occasion is there to plead for regeneration, and the soul's consciousness of being born again? The circumstances are exactly parallel. And suppose a man may be safe in venturing his salvation with God, thro' the atonement and righteousness of Christ, as undoubtedly he may; doth it from hence follow that he should have no concern for a comfortable sense of his safety? But this consolation must arise from a good hope of interest in Christ; and this hope must be evidenc'd by a consciousness of received grace.—Thus a principle of implanted grace, and the soul's consciousness of having received the same, appear to be points of very great importance, notwithstanding what Mr. P—— says lower down in this page, where he observes and thinks his Friend will readily allow of it; that “a person
“ may begin and proceed in his path to
“ Heaven safely, comfortably, and holily,

§2 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

“ by the knowledge of Jesus Christ and him
“ crucified, as a free and perfect Saviour ;
“ without so much as thinking about any
“ other principle of grace, as previous to or
“ distinct from the knowledge of Jesus Christ ;
“ finding his comfort, strength, &c. flowing
“ into his soul thro’ that knowledge ; and if
“ so, what you are pleading so earnestly for,
“ cannot possibly be esteemed a point of any
“ great importance.” Now tho’ I might justly
pass by these things as being anticipated
above, yet since Mr. P—— thinks they
are so plain as to admit of no doubt, and
so much to the purpose as effectually to in-
validate the necessity of pleading for an im-
planted principle of grace, and the soul’s con-
sciousness of the same, &c. I would therefore
observe, that there is a general impropriety
runs thro’ the whole ; for in the first place,
Mr. P—— not only opposeth himself again in
regard to that of believers proving their spiri-
tual relation to God by the operation of his
grace on their souls ; but he represents this
gracious operation itself, and a knowledge
of their relation to God, by means thereof, to
be points of no great importance : Straining and
self-contradicting divinity this ! However, if
Mr. P—— doth not esteem it a point of any
great importance, to be under the operation of
divine grace, and to know his relation to God,
others do ; and that because the comfort of the
soul, and joy in the Holy Ghost absolutely de-
pends thereupon ; Nor is this all, but Mr.

P——

P—— begs the question, and takes it for granted ; what as yet he has not nor ever can prove ; *viz.* that a literal knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified, is a principle of grace, and sufficient to answer all the purposes of the heavenly traveller : And lower down in the same p. he tells us, “ that the atonement and
“ righteousness of Christ revealed in the word
“ and believed by the soul is the proper prin-
“ ciple of grace.” Here I must first ask Mr.

P—— what he means by joining the atonement and righteousness of Christ and the soul's belief together, as tho' they were one and the same ? Strange compounded principle of grace indeed ! made up partly of the righteousness of Christ, and partly of the creature's act ; and that too, by one who would be thought an enemy to all compounds, and who has exerted all his force in order to separate faith and its genuine fruits, lest the latter should share in the glory of the former : but now the imperfect act of believing must be put upon a level, and made one with the divine atonement, and glorious righteousness, of the Lord Jesus. Similar to this he tells us, p. 39, that “ it is the work of Christ re-
“ ported and believed, which makes men
“ acceptable to God, and heals the wounded
“ conscience.” Rank Arminianism both : nor can they be true in their own nature ; for the report of facts and the facts themselves infinitely differ ; and a belief of reported facts cannot be supposed to give being

to

54 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

to the facts themselves: therefore, tho' the Gospel-revelation reports that finners are made acceptable to God by the atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ; yet this report is so far from being the acceptance itself, that it is only a report that there is such an acceptance: And tho' a belief of this report is necessary to a personal benefit therefrom, yet this belief is no part of the soul's acceptance and justification before God. I always thought that the atonement and righteousness of Christ was the subject-matter on which a principle of grace acted itself, and not that grace is the principle thereof; and that neither the act of the soul in believing, nor the grace itself by which the soul believes, is to be joined with the atonement and righteousness of Christ: Nor is it possible for a soul to enter the heavenly road without a principle of implanted grace; much less to walk safely and holily without such a principle; and as for a comfortably walking therein, this absolutely depends upon some degree of consciousness of grace received, and an interest in the Lord Jesus: For tho' a man might walk safely even under clouds and darkness, and when ready to question the truth of grace within him, and an interest in Christ; yet what comfort can a man have without some hope of these things? And Mr. P—— has told us, that it is a presumptuous hope that has not a good evidence for it: and if Mr. P—— should think that a bare belief of the Gospel-report

report is so evidently sufficient, I must then say, that thousands will be found to have such an evidence, who will never reach the heavenly Canaan; Matt. vii. 22. *Many shall say in that day, Lord, Lord, &c. &c.* Again, he must be an uncommon Traveller in the heavenly road, who, in all his journey, shall have no reflecting thought on that distinguishing grace by which he was called from the way of sin and destruction, and engaged to travel in the way that leads to everlasting life; and who, under all his temptations, snares and dangers, doubts and fears, shall have nothing to support and encourage him in an evidential way, but his literal knowledge and bare belief of the Gospel-report; nor can I think it possible for a Believer to travel all his way to heaven, without repeated reflections on the implantation and waterings of grace in the heart; and that with a divine pleasure, and without any danger of being led out of his way, or losing sight of his blessed Lord. And here I would observe, that if we must reject the doctrine of implanted grace, and the soul's consciousness of having received the same, for fear we should derive all our hope, comfort and joy therefrom, to the rejecting of, or slighting, the Lord Jesus; we must, for the same reason, reject the word and ordinances of the Gospel themselves, yea, and all the duties of religion, lest, because they are to the Believer ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace; he
should

56 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

should derive his supreme hope, comfort and joy, from the same. And what satisfaction can a judicious and conscientious soul have in meddling with the sacred ordinances of the Lord Jesus, unless he has some hope and consciousness of having received the grace of God, by which his divine right and title to those ordinances is evidenced to him, and by which alone he can receive them to his spiritual advantage? I might enlarge upon these things, but I hope what I have said will be thought sufficient to prove that a principle of implanted grace, and a consciousness of having received the same, are points of the last importance. I therefore proceed to another use of these important points, and that is, they serve to detect Mr. P—— in his needless jealousy and unfriendly concern for his Friends, p. 20 and 53. In the former of these he says, “ A spirit of affectionate godly jealousy obliges
“ me to add in christian faithfulness, that
“ all the comfort and pleasure you take, or
“ desire to take, from the conception and
“ contemplation of an inward work in your
“ soul, separate from a distinct view of Christ,
“ known and believed, is, I am persuaded,
“ false and delusive.” And in the latter he says, “ If my Friends know no other peace
“ of conscience than what they derive from
“ a reflection upon past experiences and evidences, I am sorry they have learned to
“ reject the enjoyment of such a divine pleasure
“ sure

“ sure as I wish my own soul always warm’d
“ by ; and should be glad if they would
“ consider what they are pursuing, for their
“ peace and hope towards God.” Now
“ I call this a needless jealousy, and unfriendly concern, because hereby Mr. P—— represents his Friends in a wrong light, and gives the world a mistaken idea of them, attended with an unkind reflection : for where is the Man who fetches all his divine comfort and pleasure from the conception and contemplation of an implanted principle of grace in his own soul, and who knows no other peace of conscience than what he derives from a reflection upon past experiences and evidences ? Not Arminians themselves ; these will join Christ with their graces, experiences, &c. And as for the Calvinists, such as I suppose Mr. P——’s Friends to be, these are so far from taking all their comfort from the consciousness of implanted grace, and past experience, that the comfort they very justly fetch from these things becomes subservient to their greater comfort and joy in the Lord Jesus, as hath been already considered : And since those persons do not look upon any thing wrought in them, or done by them, to be any part of their justification before God, there is therefore no danger that the comfort and joy arising from the above things should interfere with, or lessen that, which is to be derived from

58 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

the Lord alone: And it is certain that no man is better (or indeed truly) qualified for, or generously disposed to rejoice in the Lord Jesus, than the man of gracious experience: So that while the true Believer may with the utmost propriety say, Blessed grace which I have received, and blessed experience with which I am indulged, yet what is the result of all? But blessed be the Lord for those divine bestowments. And in the language of the Psalmist; *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits, &c.* Psal. ciii. 2, 3, 4, 5. And where is the legality, pharisaical, and ungospel frame of mind in all this? One would be tempted to think that Mr. P—— was a stranger to the nature and truly godly influence of divine grace in the soul, to speak so much against, and represent it in such a light as he doth; but I would rather attribute it to his tenacious and over fond esteem for the new light he has received; a light which has more darkness belonging to it, than that which he opposeth, and by which he himself is strangely bewildered, and in consequence of which has made havock of the church of God.

But I proceed: The doctrine of implanted grace, and the soul's consciousness of having received it, is an antidote against, and sufficient to explode, the profane notion I hear some of Mr. P——'s or some of Mr. S——'s disciples are fallen into, that a mere head-knowledge of the Gospel-report is sufficient to sal-

vation;

vation; so that if a person doth but understand the meaning of what he reads in the Gospel, and believes the same to be true, there is no occasion to be concerned about any implanted grace, divine experience, or any other kind of faith but that of a bare belief: if this is not their meaning, there is no meaning in their sayings, suitable to the import of words: and indeed, what has Mr. P—— himself said less, when he tells us, that “it is the work of Christ reported and “believed, that makes men acceptable to “God, and heals the wounded conscience;” p. 29. (a passage already quoted) and that “such is the nature of the Gospel, that “whosoever believes it shall be saved;” p. 66. and that “a right notion and real belief “of the truth will be productive of spiri- “tual and saving fruits.” p. 43. Now as these things are the same in their meaning with that of a mere head-knowledge, I cannot but call it a prophane notion, because it is repugnant to our holy religion, and greatly derogates from the honour of the blessed Jesus, as it puts him off with a superficial knowledge and faith of things, contrary to the great end of his coming into the world, and of giving us a divine revelation, which was that his People might have life, the life of grace here, and that they might have it more abundantly in the life of glory hereafter; John x. 10; and he gave us the revelation of these things, that we might

60 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

know and believe them to be true; and, at the same time, is so far from intending, or supposing that the knowing and believing this revelation would be sufficient to salvation, that he hath in the same revelation declared the necessity of the soul's being taught, and of having learned of the Father, in a manner infinitely beyond, tho' not contrary to, what the Gospel in the letter of it can teach, I mean influentially, so as to engage the will and desire of the soul after salvation by the Lord Jesus; and which is called the day of his power, in opposition to the bare letter of the word; Psal. cx. 3. and which is not the case with every one who both know the meaning, and believe the truth of the Gospel-report. The Lord Jesus hath also promised to send his Spirit to take of those things contained in the Gospel-report, and to shew them to his People, that they might know them in their spiritual and saving nature; and which they could not do but by the Spirit; for it is the Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God, and reveals them to his People, 1 Cor. ii. 10; and in the 12th verse the Apostle exults in the divine and distinguishing bestowment; *Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* In which words the apostle evidently distinguishes betwixt a literal knowledge of divine things, possible and common to natural men, under a divine revelation, thro'

thro' the wisdom of the world ; and that divine and saving knowledge which is by the teaching of the Spirit of God. And here I cannot help introducing the excellent and nervous remark of Dr. Crisp, in his explanation of the above passage, vol. 1. p. 309. " The knowledge of things given is two-
" fold ; first, intellectual ; secondly, practical : the intellectual knowledge is the natural understanding of the thing in a proper sense ; practical knowledge is a sensible knowledge. You may distinguish them thus : as the knowledge a man has of the
" sweetness of sugar in his understanding,
" and the knowledge of the sweetness of it
" in the taste. There is a great deal of difference between these two ; for the things
" of God that are given may be known intellectually in a common way, not only
" by the Elect, but Reprobate ; but the
" People of God only know them practically ; that is, they receive by degrees the
" sweetness of them, and God gives the taste
" of them more and more to them." So then tho' the Gospel-report does undoubtedly contain every thing necessary to be believed in order to salvation, yet is it not of such a nature as to give salvation to every one who may know its meaning, and believe the truth of it : This is neither Scripture-language, nor Scripture-meaning ; for the Gospel-report is no-where proposed to be the object of saving faith ; but being the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the only record God hath given
of

62 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

of his Son, it is therefore the proper and only subject of faith and believing, by which, under a divine agency, souls are led to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus, the great object thereof. And there is an infinite difference betwixt a believing the revelation itself, and a savingly believing on the Lord Jesus, the great subject of this revelation, (notwithstanding all Mr. P—— hath said to the contrary, p. 46.) Thousands have the former, who know nothing of the latter; and our Lord himself evidently represents it to be one thing to see the Son, as held forth in the word, and another thing to believe on him with a saving faith; John vi. 40. words of the same import with those in chap. v. 24. *He that hath my words, and believeth on him that sent me, &c.* Nor is it possible to evade the force of these things with any propriety; for if our Lord doth not intend a real distinction between the seeing and believing here spoken of, he must then be chargeable with an unmeaning tautology. He that seeth the Son, and seeth the Son; which would sound very uncouth to the judicious reader: Nor is it possible without such a distinction to maintain the doctrine of distinguishing and efficacious grace in the Gospel's being the favour of life unto life to some, and of death unto death to others; tho' equally believed as to the truth of the words: So that Mr. P——'s suggesting to us that the different effect of the Gospel is owing to "the one's
" be-

“believing it to be true, whilst the other
“believes it to be false, or having some
“lie connected with the truth;” (p. 41.)
is not true in itself, nor good divinity; for
this is making the efficacy of the Gospel de-
pend on the creature’s act of believing;
whereas true and saving faith always depends
upon, and is owing to, the efficacy of the
Gospel: And tho’ it is not possible that the
Gospel should have any saving effects unless
it be believed, yet it may be believed, and
have no saving effects.

This leads me to what Mr. P—— calls a
right notion and real belief, and which he
says will be productive of spiritual and saving
fruits: And since by a right notion and real
belief Mr. P—— intends nothing more than
a person’s understanding what the Gospel
means, when it speaks of salvation alone by
the Lord Jesus, together with the import-
ance and necessity of such a salvation, and
their believing the same to be true; I must
still abide by the negative, that such a notion
and belief cannot be productive of spiritual
and saving fruits. And Mr. P—— in assert-
ing it can and will, runs counter to the phi-
losophical maxim, that no principle can ex-
ceed its own nature, or be productive of ef-
fects more excellent than itself: And since
Mr. P——’s right notion and real belief has
no supernatural and divine principle in it,
therefore it cannot produce supernatural and
divine effects; and this is confirmed both by
the

64 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

the Gospel and universal experience: Our Lord sufficiently suggests to us, that a person might know the things contained in the Gospel, and yet not be influenced thereby to do them. John xiii. 17. And in Luke xii. 47. he says, *He that knoweth his Lord's will, and doth it not, &c.* Nor can I see how the Gospel-ministration can augment the guilt and punishment, but upon the foot of knowing the meaning of the Gospel. The Apostle also speaks of understanding all mysteries, and of having all knowledge; in which, among other things, is undoubtedly included the knowledge of divine revelation, &c. And yet, to be void of a principle of saving grace; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And in chap. viii. 1. he represents the fruit of bare knowledge to be pride and arrogance. And indeed, constant experience confirms the insufficiency of a bare notion and belief of things: Many there are who have a right and truly orthodox notion of the doctrines of the Gospel, and believe them to be true, on whom they have no saving influences; but, on the contrary, they hold the truth in unrighteousness. Rom. i. 18. These are enemies to the cross of Christ by their unsuitable and inconsistent behaviour. Others there are, whose knowledge and faith of the Gospel has had some transient influences upon them, and who, according to the Apostle, have escaped the pollutions of the world, through (says he) the knowledge of the Lord
and

and Saviour Jesus Christ; and yet he is very exprefs in pointing out their fatal condition, ſhould they be again entangled and overcome; that it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them; and then, by a double metaphor, concludes them to be in a natural and graceleſs ſtate, notwithſtanding all their knowledge and faith, 2 Pet. 2, 20, &c. Others there are, who, either by the means of a good education, or thro' a cloſe attention to their Bibles, &c. have obtained a right notion and real belief of the Goſpel, and are moralized and ſober, and perhaps pay a great regard to the externals of religion, and yet are in a ſtate of unregeneracy, and ſtrangers to the ſupernatural and ſaving influences of the Goſpel; and which, when they come to be converted, they are very ready to own; at the ſame time, this their converſion makes no change in the ſentiments of their minds, as to the doctrines of the Goſpel: But all the difference between their former and preſent ſtate is this (and indeed it is infinite) they formerly received the truth of the Goſpel in the letter of it only, but now they feel the ſame truth in its ſupernatural and ſaving power, and experimentally know the difference between a Chriſt revealed to their judgment and faith, and a Chriſt revealed in them by his Spirit. Theſe perſons have been

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already

66 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

already mentioned by one of Mr. P——'s Friends, as a glaring proof of the insufficiency of a right notion and real belief, and taken notice of by Mr. P——, in p. 42 and 43, and by him thought to be sufficiently invalidated; but not being satisfied, I shall make some remarks upon it. Mr. P—— doth not deny the fact itself, that a person might be instructed into, and receive the doctrines of the Gospel, before his conversion; but observes, that "this can be of no weight to those in this case, who take the Scriptures only for their rule." This is a strange evasion; for since the instance before us is the very thing itself in dispute, and every way agreeable to the divine word, it has a double weight with it; and since Mr. P—— has produced no one Scripture against this well-known circumstance, it yet stands unshaken and confirmed. But Mr. P—— tells us, that "many questions may be put which may tend to weaken the evidence of many conversions." But I cannot see how, unless Mr. P—— imagines that a person's being of the same faith and judgment doctrinally before his conversion, as he is after it, can be supposed to render his conversion doubtful; but this I am sure the judicious will never admit. However, Mr. P—— asks, "whether the person here spoken of had any hope before his conversion?" And upon a supposition he had, Mr. P—— then says, "It is plain that that former

“ former hope was founded upon a lye, or
“ the belief of a destructive falsehood.”
Here I cannot but observe the impropriety of
this question ; for what has hope to do in the
present case ? since whether an unconverted
man has any hope or no, it does not affect
the sentiment of his mind with regard to his
notion and faith of doctrines : however, I
must confess that the answer to this question
is to me unintelligible ; for since the subject
of the said person’s knowledge and faith is
allow’d to be the doctrines of the Gospel, I
hope Mr. P—— will not call these destruc-
tive falsehoods ; and since his knowledge and
faith is also allowed to be right and real, Mr.
P—— cannot, consistent with himself, call
either of these destructive falsehoods : The
destruction therefore relative to such a person
must arise from the want of what we are
pleading for, namely, something more and
greater than that of a right notion and real
belief, &c. And thus Mr. P——’s own an-
swer to the question is full against himself,
whether this person had, or had not, hope
in his unconverted state ; if he had no hope,
it was because his right notion and real belief
could not produce it ; and then how doth its
sufficiency appear ? And if he had hope, and
this hope was founded upon a lie, or the belief
of a destructive falsehood, it will then follow,
that a right notion and real belief of the
Gospel is so far from producing spiritual and
saving fruits, that it produceth false and de-

structive ones, or, at least, doth not preserve from them. Similar hereto was the case of Judas the traitor, whom Mr. P—— allows to have witnessed to the truth of our Lord's doctrine, yet went and hanged himself: And whereas Mr. P—— ascribes this to his not believing that the blood of Christ was sufficient and free for his salvation, p. 42, this is a confirming proof of the insufficiency of a right notion, &c. since it did not produce saving faith in Judas, but left him in a graceless and perishing state: This also was the case with Simon Magus, and others already mentioned, and of those chief rulers spoken of, John xii. 42, 43; who are said to believe on the Lord, but did not confess him, they still loving the praise of men more than the praise of God. And indeed, where there is only a right notion and real belief, in Mr. P——'s sense thereof, such persons might justly be compared to Ezekiel's dry bones, when shook together, bone to his bone, and covered with sinews, flesh and skin, a shew of human nature, but without life and motion. In a word, if a right notion and real belief is of a saving nature, consequently necessary to salvation, must not a man have some consciousness that he hath received this right notion, &c.? And will he not then be in as much danger of fetching his hope, comfort and joy therefrom, to the rejecting or slighting the Lord Jesus, as the man that believes in the doctrine of implanted grace, and
has

has a consciousness of having received it, is in danger of fetching his hope, &c. from the same? Yea, and I think abundantly more, for a principle of implanted grace and a consciousness of having received it, will always lead to the Lord Jesus, whereas we have seen that a right notion, &c. doth not.

I would now consider Mr. P—'s summary, or what I might call a whole broadside of arguments against the doctrine of implanted grace, and gracious experience, as a ground of subjective hope, and personal evidence of special interest in Christ, p. 63, 64. where speaking of persons, discerning satisfaction or good hope of interest in Christ, he observes,
“ that to come at this we set about to examine
“ our own hearts and ways, our past conduct
“ or past experience; in hopes of finding
“ something there which may be a means of
“ allaying our fears and easing our consciences.
“ Now we look with eagerness and solicitude
“ into every corner of our hearts, to see whether in the midst of all the bad we find
“ there, we cannot find something good
“ wrought in us, or something truly gracious in our experiences, that should be a
“ proper satisfying proof of our special interest; all which pains are taken chiefly
“ with this view, to obtain ease to our minds
“ and consciences. Upon enquiry, we perhaps
“ discern some probable evidences in our favour, or think we have felt some distinguishing experiences; and thus obtain ease
“ and

“ and relief. But what if it should appear after
“ all that these evidences are attended with
“ uncertainty, or that there is some reason
“ to suspect they may be delusive? How then
“ can the mind be eased or the conscience pa-
“ cified upon this plan? And let us here se-
“ riously reflect, that while we are thus anxi-
“ ously employed to get rest to our souls, we
“ are now under a strong bias to think the
“ best and make the best of what we find
“ and feel. How then can we know, but
“ that under the influence of such a propen-
“ sity, we may actually put a cheat upon our-
“ selves, thro’ a fond desire to apprehend that
“ our state is at the bottom safe and good?
“ And what if our deceitful hearts should
“ operate in this case, to bring us into a de-
“ lusion; where are we then? And who can
“ answer for his own heart, so as to assure
“ himself that he is under no fundamental
“ mistake? I know that these thoughts at
“ first view seem to take away all use for
“ marks and signs. But they do not, as we
“ shall soon see. However that be, no one
“ I think can deny or evade the force of these
“ observations, how searching or discouraging
“ soever, they may seem to be; but there are
“ some further thoughts equally alarming,
“ which must not be omitted: have not many
“ made a shining profession, and to their own
“ and others apprehension been favoured with
“ the distinguishing experiences, who yet
“ have turned out hypocrites and apostates?
“ Have

“ Have not many talked high things about
“ the witness, seal and earnest of the spirit,
“ as enjoyed by themselves, and yet have been
“ in the event found liars? again, are there
“ not counterfeit graces, comforts and ex-
“ periences? Can these things be denied?
“ Upon this plan for obtaining peace, we must
“ therefore distinguish, divide, and subdi-
“ vide very nicely, before we can be supposed
“ to arrive at any degree of certainty, by dis-
“ tinguishing what is genuine from what is
“ counterfeit; and after all, most probably
“ the matter must remain in doubtful and
“ sad suspense.” Thus, Sir, I have tran-
scribed Mr. P—— verbatim, that you might
see what a broadside he hath poured at once.
However, it so happens that Mr. P—— is
not a good engineer, his ammunition is bad,
his cannon all pointed too low, and even burst
in firing to the injury of his own cause: for,
concerning a person’s examining himself to
find out the evidences of grace as a ground
of subjective hope, &c. I cannot but be sur-
prized that Mr. P—— should so soon forget
himself, in that by a variety of circumstances
already observed he hath justified the said
self-examination, particularly p. 47. where
he tells us, “ that a man may safely conclude
“ he is born again, if he be conscious that his
“ faith in this truth is productive of love to
“ God and his people; &c. and that the be-
“ lievers joy ariseth from a persuasion of their
“ personal interest in the great blessings of the
“ co-

72 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

“ covenant, by a personal experience of a
 “ work of grace on their souls, and they ge-
 “ nuine fruits of such a work,” and adds Mr.
 “ S——n’s account of the same, and of his
 censuring Mr. Harvey for denying that “ per-
 “ sons may prove their title to comfort by ge-
 “ nuine marks of conversion; yea and charges
 “ it with approaching near to ridiculing the
 “ work of the Holy Ghost as a Comforter.”
 P. 54. and in p. 73. Mr. P—— says, “ in
 “ this manner a believer makes use of his ex-
 “ periences to judge of his state; and such ex-
 “ periences as these with their genuine fruits,
 “ are indeed, the surest marks of our elec-
 “ tion. 1 Theff. i. 4, 5.” Now, Sir, can any
 thing be more in favour of the above looking
 into ourselves, which Mr. P—— would re-
 present to be a false and legal way of obtain-
 ing satisfaction and comfort? Can any man
 be more inconsistent, and clash with him-
 self more than Mr. P—— doth in this case?
 For how are persons to come at the knowledge
 of those genuine marks of conversion; and
 of a personal experience of a work of
 grace on their souls, but by the means of
 examination, since these things are general-
 ly most out of sight when they are most
 wanted? And when by the means of exami-
 nation a person is favoured with the knowledge
 of these things, is he to pay no regard thereto,
 but absolutely slight and reject the divine evi-
 dence, and that for fear he should slight the
 Lord Jesus? I have already shewn this to be

impossible, since by how much the more, and by what means soever a man's interest is evidenced to him, by so much the more will he rejoice alone in the Lord as the grand object of his hope.

To the above things I must not omit to add, that Mr. P—— makes love and obedience the very key and foundation of assurance and proof of special interest in Christ, p. 65. where he asks, " what kind of assurance " a person would have? Do you want (says he) " immediately to be so fully certified of your " everlasting welfare as shall set you at rest " from all fear; that shall determine your " state whether you love and obey Christ or " no?" To which I answer, no verily, so far from that, that the conscientious soul wants his interest in Christ evidenced to him, by a more warm and feeling affection to his Lord, love to Christ being both the fruit and evidence of Christ's love to the soul, Prov. viii. 17.—And as for the uncertainty attending those evidences, together with the hypocrisy, apostacy, &c. mentioned by Mr. P——; if there is any argument in these things they will bear full as hard against Mr. P——'s present scheme of things as against that which he is now opposing; unless Mr. P—— has the vanity to imagine that his present scheme is infallible; and that those who embrace it cannot possibly be mistaken, and are in no danger of turning apostates, &c. I say short of such a vain imagination Mr. P——

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himself is in as much danger of being deceived in his present scheme as he was in his former, and of becoming an apostate from his present scheme as he has been from his former; and indeed, who can say? not Mr. P—— himself, what new and greater light he may yet receive sufficient to induce him to reject the present: however, let the object and ground of a man's faith be what it will, apostacy does not generally arise from thence, but is owing to some default in faith itself, the leading principle of the whole. And that is the want of an implanted principle of grace, by which alone it can be the faith of the operation of God, peculiar to God's elect, and of an abiding nature. And as we have here a fresh instance of the necessity and excellency of such a principle, so likewise a fresh proof of the insufficiency of a right notion, &c. for it would be incredible to suppose that such shining professors, distinguished by such extraordinary experiences, as Mr. P—— represents them, should be ignorant of the meaning, and void of a real belief of the Gospel-report, and yet we see it did not preserve from apostacy; and truly the evidence of interest, and ground of hope, arising from this right notion and real belief, is more precarious by far, than that which ariseth from an implanted principle of grace, and the soul's consciousness of having received the same; in that a man is in more danger of forming a wrong notion of things that are to be believed, than

than he is of being mistaken in things that are to be felt and experienced: so that to use Mr. P——'s own words, a man had need divide and subdivide, again and again, to be sure that he is right in his notion.

But farther, suppose some have been deceived and deceiving, turned out hypocrites, or apostates, will Mr. P— give up his judgment and faith, experience and hope, as null and void upon that account? or will he give up his present judgment and faith as delusive, because he thinks he was deceived in his former? I am surprized at such a manner of arguing as this; for according to this rule, a man may give up all his religion, both doctrinal, experimental, and practical, as a mere delusion, because some have turned out apostates, &c. rather let us be of the Apostle's mind 1 John ii. 19. that those apostates went out from among the people of God that it might be made manifest, that notwithstanding their right notion and real belief they were not of them; for no doubt if they had been of the people of God by a principle of implanted grace in the heart, they would have continued with them. And till a person becomes conscious that his faith and judgment, experience and hope, run counter to the divine word, he is to take his Lord's advice, to hold that fast which he hath, that no man take his crown, Rev. iii. 11. his crown of rejoicing both in the imputed righteousness of Christ, by which he stands justified before God, and

76 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

his crown of rejoicing in an implanted principle of grace as the evidence of this his justification ; and by which alone he is qualified to rejoice in the divine righteousness itself. And since it is possible to be deceived, and that fatally, in the business of religion, and to become hypocrites, or apostates, there is therefore the greater call for self-examination and a most impartial enquiry into the state of our souls, whether we have received the grace of God or no ; as well knowing that if Jesus Christ is not in us by his Spirit and grace, as well as revealed to us in his gospel, all our notions about religion, and the belief of the same will leave us in a reprobate state, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Mr. P—— has indeed attempted to elude the force of this awful passage, by telling us that the evident design of it is to intimate thus much, “ if any thing appears in the
“ temper or conduct of a professor, which is
“ disagreeable to the gospel, he ought to take
“ occasion from hence to suspect, whether he
“ be in the faith ; p. 74.” But I must take leave to say that as this is a new, so it is a very mean and false gloss upon the words : according to this way of wresting the word of God, a man may support what system of religion he shall think fit ; however, this very interpretation, destroys Mr. P——’s own design in using it ; for if the truth of a man’s being in the faith depends upon the agreeableness of his temper and conduct, and this is to be known by the business of examination (for this

is the duty recommended by the Apostle, let the thing to be known be what it will) is not this granting the very thing he opposeth? And as for his telling us, "that if our experiences are of the right stamp, they will evidence themselves:" this is not only opposing the above concession, but is an indecent reflection upon the inspired writer, for his being so particular and earnest in urging the business of examining and proving our own selves to obtain the knowledge of that which might be known without any such examination. Sure I am, that neither the Apostle nor his admirers would thank him for this piece of prophane liberty. While at the same time the truth of our faith, and the rightness of our experiences by the indwelling of Christ in the soul, is the very thing to be examined after; and that because it is possible to be deceived in this important affair: and the more a man presumes without examination, the greater is the danger of his being deceived: at the same time, this examination doth not in the least reflect upon, or lay the sufficiency of the merit and righteousness of Christ, or the faithfulness of God under suspicion, but is entirely concerned about the soul's personal interest in these things: nor is it true, that a man is to suspect the truth of his faith and conclude himself a reprobate, on account of some things in his temper and conduct disagreeable to the purity of the gospel; for then where is the christian who would not have cause thus to conclude, notwithstanding

78 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

withstanding his right notion and real belief, &c? And is not this making a man depend upon the goodness of his temper and conduct?

To this astonishing instance of misapplying the divine word, I would remark a few things more of the like nature. Mr. P—— is so fond of what he calls the implanted word, and the knowledge of Christ by the Gospel, that he sets himself against, and with great impropriety attempts to elude, the force of all those sacred passages that are brought in defence of a divine agency, and to point out the real and material difference between the word in the letter and meaning of it, and its saving efficacy on the soul by the Divine Spirit. I say, with great impropriety, because Mr. P—— himself sometimes owns the necessity of a divine agency to write the divine truth upon our hearts, p. 22, and several other places; yet is he so fond of his new light, and his peculiar way of expressing himself, that he is very jealous of every thing that hath the appearance of a design against it. I shall not insist upon every instance of this nature, but only a few of the most remarkable ones. 1 Pet. i. 23, 25, *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* Here Mr. P—— is too positive in asserting, that by the word of God, and the incorruptible seed, is meant one and the same thing, p. 14; since the

Apostle

Apostle is so express in representing the latter to be by the means of the former: And indeed, the word of God in the letter, and ministration of it, is no more than the ordinary means in the hand of God, by which he begets or regenerates souls thro' the agency of his Divine Spirit. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, James i. 18. and is therefore called *the power of God unto salvation*, Rom. i. 16. and is so far from being the seed or principle of life-giving grace in the soul, that faith, the first acting grace in the soul consequent upon this divine principle, is said to come by hearing the word preached; and therefore the seed, and faith springing from it, cannot be the word itself: The idea is very distinct; and tho' the word of God, in the matter and efficacy thereof, is of an everlasting nature, yet it is not so in the letter and ministration of it, and when our Lord calls it the seed, in the parable of the sower, yet there it is to be understood in a ministerial sense, because three out of four who received it perished under it. And this is a circumstance which evidently distinguisheth between the word and the seed, or principle of grace in the soul, in that wherever the latter cometh, it is effectual to salvation; and is that seed which St. John speaks of, which preserves from final apostacy, by virtue of its abiding nature in the soul; 1 John, iii. 9. which the word with all its fulness cannot do. And whereas Mr. P—— tells us, that 1 Pet. i. 25.

80 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

i. 25. reads in the Greek, "And this is the saying which is declared as good news to you;" I would observe, that tho' the different readings make no alteration in the sense and design of the words, yet the Greek reading is more explicit and full against himself, in that the saying and declaring of things is not, nor can with any propriety be deemed the things themselves.

The next passage mentioned by Mr. P—'s opponent in defence of a divine agency, is 1 John, ii. 20; and a most glorious one it is, as it doth in a very striking manner express the infinite difference between this divine teaching, and that teaching which those had, mentioned in the preceding verse, who, with all their knowledge and faith, knew nothing savingly; nor could they abide even in the knowledge they had received; but, says the Apostle, (and that very emphatically) ye have an unction, not merely from the word, but from the Holy One himself, and ye know all things; all things contained in the word, both doctrinally, efficaciously, and experimentally, so far as is necessary to salvation. And this anointing abideth in the soul, as a teaching and establishing principle, keeping up and maintaining a divine communion and fellowship between Christ and the soul. (ver. 27.) Against this passage Mr. P—— objects nothing in fact, but only in form. He says, that "this anointing doth not mean any thing distinct from the truth abiding in
" us

“ us by the operation of the Spirit.” (p. 14.) And if Mr. P—— would but be consistent in abiding by what he here and in other places owns, that the truth of the word in the saving efficacy of it is brought to, and implanted in the soul by this divine unction, or teaching of the Spirit, all controversy with him on this subject would be at an end; and Mr. P—— would cease from opposing the doctrine of implanted grace, and the teaching of the Spirit, in order to a saving knowledge of the divine word; and from explaining away the genuine sense of the many passages of Scripture that speak the same things: For if the saving knowledge of the Gospel is owing to the teaching of the Divine Spirit, then this teaching must precede the knowledge itself. And tho’ the Divine Spirit doth not teach more than what the word of the Gospel contains, yet he teaches in such an efficacious manner, which the word itself cannot do; and this is that peculiar teaching which our Lord intends, when he says *they shall be all taught of God*. John vi. 45. But Mr. P—— cannot stand to his own concession; for he will have it, that “ the word in the heart is the principle of “ grace itself, (p. 16.) and the very seed by “ which the soul is spiritually begotten, and “ the food by which the spiritually begotten “ soul is fed and nourished in the divine “ life.” (p. 15.) This is such a confounding of different ideas, and blending of different

82 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

metaphors together, that few will care to receive it; for the seed of life and the food of nourishment are certainly different things in their own nature: And tho' the word is indeed the means of begetting souls to a spiritual life, and the means of nourishing the begotten soul therein, yet the Spirit of God is the alone Agent in begetting of souls by the seed of divine grace, to the knowledge of the word itself: And the flesh and blood of a crucified Jesus, as held forth in the word, the spiritual food of souls thus begotten. Again, Mr. P—— says, "the Gospel believed is the reason of the true Christian;" p. 11. And in p. 19, that "the atonement and righteousness of Christ revealed in the word, and believed by the soul, is the proper principle of grace." Now both these declarations fall infinitely short of the above concession, in that they contain nothing of a divine agency in them, such a belief being possible without any; and indeed, that christianity that ariseth from, and hath no other reason and cause for it, than the bare belief of the Gospel-report, can be no better than a literal and nominal christianity: And should we be told that the sun's being in the firmament, and a man's believing the same, or seeing and feeling its light and heat is the principle of natural life in that man, we should think it bad philosophy, since a principle of natural life is previously necessary,

cessary, both to a believing, seeing; and feeling: Nor can the word of the Gospel, and our belief of the same, be the cause of spiritual life, any more than the sun in the firmament, and our belief thereof, can be the cause of natural life. It is therefore very injudicious, and bad divinity, for Mr. P—— to suppose the pre-existence of faith in the soul to that of his being brought to spiritual life. His words are these: "The faith of the Gospel is sufficient in the hand of the Blessed Spirit, to renew and sanctify the soul." (p. 12.) And that "it is the faith of the Gospel which quickens us to spiritual life, being made effectual hereto by the power of God." (p. 58.) Whereas Mr. P—— should consider, that what knowledge and faith soever a man might have antecedent to his being renewed, quickened, and brought to spiritual life, it cannot be deemed evangelical, and therefore not worth mentioning in the present case. And as for the passage on which the notion is grounded, Col. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, thro' the faith of the operation of God, &c.* I cannot but wonder that a person who has been so long in the ministry should run away with the sound of words, without considering either the design of the inspired Writer, or the propriety of things themselves; for whatever might be the particular meaning of these words, nothing can be more absurd than to

84 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

suppose the fruit and effect of things to be the means of the existence of those things; faith therefore being the fruit and effect of a spiritual resurrection, cannot be the means of such a resurrection. However, had Mr. P— judiciously attended to the words themselves, he would have seen that a spiritual resurrection is not contained in them, or intended by them, at least not in a direct sense; but that the design of the apostle is to point out the mystical nature and spiritual use of the holy ordinance of Baptism to the true Believer: The mode of which ordinance is a very lively emblem of the burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; also a figurative representation of the baptized believer's burial and resurrection with Christ; I say figurative, for I hope Mr. P—— will not call baptism a spiritual resurrection, or so much as the means thereof; since persons may be baptized, and yet be spiritually dead; in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity: It is so far from being the means thereof, that a spiritual resurrection is previously necessary to, and the Gospel-qualification for, the ordinance itself; and yet Mr. P—— might with as much propriety look upon, and esteem baptism a spiritual resurrection, as he might look upon, and esteem faith to be so; for the words are very express: *Wherein also you are risen with him,* (i. e.) in baptism (but figuratively); and when it is added, thro' the faith of the operation of God; the meaning is, that it is by this
faith

faith the believer views and enjoys this ordinance in its mystical and spiritual design; and no faith short of the faith of the operation of God can view and enjoy it in this light: Nor can we understand the word in any other sense, without making baptism a spiritual resurrection: And here, Sir, we see the necessity and excellency of divine faith, both as previous to, and acting itself in and about this holy ordinance. And whereas Mr. P— tells us, that “the Scriptures know no principle of grace in the heart previous to, or “distinct from, the implanted word, whereby “Christ, who is the substance of the word, “dwells in our hearts by faith.” (p. 60.) This is not only counter to his own notion of the pre-existence of faith in the soul before its conversion, but is a gross mistake in itself; for the Scriptures do know and declare in the most express manner, both the certainty and absolute necessity of a principle of grace in the heart, previous to the saving knowledge of Christ, and of divine things. John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*; neither the kingdom of grace here, nor the kingdom of glory hereafter. And please, Sir, to observe, that our Lord doth not deliver himself in the form of a prohibition, that he *shall not*, but he expresseth his incapacity; he *cannot* see, &c. Now by what means soever the eyes of the blind are opened, and the ignorant brought to understanding; the seeing and knowing must

86 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*
must arise from some antecedent cause. 2 Cor.
iv. 6. *For God, who commanded the light to
shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,
to give the light of the knowledge of the glory
of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And*
Eph. i. 2. 18. *The eyes of your understanding
being enlightened, that ye may know, &c.* And
the very passage quoted by Mr. P—— in de-
fence of his notion is full against himself.
Eph. iii. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your
hearts by faith*; since this faith is the fruit,
effect and consequence of the soul's being
first strengthened with might, by the Spirit
of God in the inner man; verse the 16th. I
shall take notice of but one passage more, as
a farther specimen of Mr. P——'s extraor-
nary talent in explaining the divine word,
John vi. 29. *This is the word of God, that ye
believe on him whom he hath sent.* These words
are an answer to the foregoing, in which the
Jews ask our Lord what they must do, that
they might work the works of God: And
nothing can be more evident than that our
Lord in this answer points out to them
what they should do. And yet Mr. P——
is pleased to tell us, that "the work here
" spoken of is not to be applied to the Jews,
" but to our Lord himself, as containing what
" he himself was to do, and not they; for,
" says he, the Jews understood Christ better
" than many do now," &c. p. 47. This is
such an injudicious, and unaccountable turn
upon the words, that one would think the
whole

whole of Mr. P——'s cause depended upon the perverting of a passage so plain and easy to be understood. However, it should be a caution to his readers and hearers, to take heed what they read, and what they hear; since a person of such a talent might soon turn the word of God into another Gospel.

Thus, Sir, I have gone through the remarks I purpose to make on Mr. P——'s performance, and have indeed far exceeded what I at first intended; but Mr. P—— has drawn me into it, by his misinterpretation of Scripture, his many improprieties, together with his frequently clashing with himself; of which many more instances might be produced; but if those already mentioned, and what I have observed concerning them, shall be esteemed just, and to the purpose, it will be sufficient to invalidate the whole of his performance, so far as it immediately concerns the points in dispute: I shall therefore sum up the whole in the following suppositions:

First, Suppose the Gospel doth contain a revelation of the grace of God, and salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ; and is therefore called the Gospel of the grace of God, and the revelation of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners; and suppose it be necessary for a person to know the meaning, and believe the truth of this Gospel-report, in order to his application to the Lord Jesus for this salvation; yet it doth not from hence follow,

88 *The FREE GRACE of G O D displayed*

follow, that such a knowledge and faith is any way sufficient to salvation. It cannot be so by virtue of any saving quality there is in itself; for it is not knowledge and faith that save the soul, but the Lord Jesus, the object thereof: Nor is it the certain means of salvation, since we have seen that a person might know the meaning, and believe the truth of the Gospel, and yet be destitute of a principle of saving grace in the heart; nor is it in the power of the Gospel-revelation to work this principle; it may be the means, but cannot be the agent, of such a divine work; for it is not its own power, but the power of God to salvation: Nor does this in the least depreciate from, or lessen the excellency of the Gospel-revelation; but as it reflects all the honour of its success, in the salvation of sinners, on the Lord himself, the great Author thereof; so it is a representing the Gospel in its proper light, and giving it all the honour it requires; for the language of the Gospel-report is in this respect similar to that of our Lord, when one asked him to speak to his Brother, that he divide the inheritance with him: Who, says he, made me a judge or a divider over you? So says the Gospel literally considered: Who made me a bestower of divine grace, or gave me power to save those who know the meaning and believe the truth of what I say? My business is indeed to reveal the gracious designs of God in the salvation
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of sinners; and to make known the way thereof to be by and thro' the Lord Jesus alone; and to declare the necessity of faith and believing in him, and of a principle of divine grace in order to this faith and believing; and to invite and encourage awakened sinners to come to him, by assuring them, that whosoever believes on the Lord Jesus shall be saved; and to declare that those who believe not shall be damn'd: But as for a power to believe, this is not mine to give: And tho' the words that I speak are spirit and truth in the matter of things, yet they are not so in the saving power thereof, to every one who knows the meaning and believes the truth of what I say. —

Again, Secondly, Suppose the Lord Jesus be the ground of an objective hope, and that the revelation made of him in the Gospel be sufficient to warrant and encourage the awakened sinner's faith and hope in him for salvation; yet, in order to guard against a superficial faith and presumptuous hope, we must distinguish between sinner and sinner: For tho' the Lord Jesus is the object of faith and hope to and for sinners, as such considered, yet is he not so to every sinner; every sinner is not a prisoner of hope in the sense of the words, or has ground for a personal and subjective hope; nor can they act faith and hope in and upon the Lord Jesus in a Gospel-way: To suppose they can, is to undervalue and set at nought the distinguish-

ing grace of God, by which one sinner is made visibly to differ from another, and by which the ground of a personal and subjective hope is wrought in the soul, and a reason can be rendered by him for the hope that is in him; which cannot be rendered by any but such. Those who can render no better reason for their hope of salvation than that of the Gospel's declaring salvation to sinners (promiscuously) by Christ, have no better than a presumptuous hope, arising from a superficial and common faith, and which will leave the soul as far short of salvation, as tho' he had never heard, known, or believed the Gospel. And when in explaining the nature of true and saving faith, we observe that it consists in, or acts itself, by influencing the soul to what is called a coming to, trusting in, relying and depending upon Christ; yet none of all these acts of the soul, tho' essential to true and saving faith, and necessary in themselves to the enjoyment of benefit from Christ, can be supposed to take away or lessen the freeness of the Gospel-hope, either by supposing that because they are necessary, therefore they must be meritorious; for faith itself is necessary, yet not meritorious; or by being a bar of discouragement to the awakened sinner's hope, that because these actings of the soul are necessary, therefore the soul should fear to hope, doubting the propriety of his coming to Christ; since the same discouragement may arise

arise from the necessity of faith, and yet the necessity of faith must be maintained; since it would be equally presumptuous to hope for salvation by Christ, without coming to him for it, as it would without believing in him; so the awakened sinner is as willing to come to, trust in, rely and depend upon Christ, as he is to hope for salvation from him: and this he doth in proportion to his faith; so that the necessity of these acts are no more a discouragement to the hope of the soul, and the freeness of salvation, than the necessity of faith itself is. And when the conscientious soul shall at any time become suspicious and doubtful concerning the propriety of his faith, and believing the reality of his being born again, the truth and sincerity of his repentance, and even whether his desires after, and coming to Christ, is truly evangelical, and of a Gospel-nature; all which things are more or less the experience and concern of every true convert; shall we, in order to relieve and satisfy their thoughtful and discomfited minds, dare to tell them that these are unnecessary, yea unlawful, thoughts and concerns? That they are of a legal nature, and tend to the rejecting of Christ, the free hope of the Gospel? and that it is sufficient for them, if they do but know the meaning, and believe the truth of the Gospel-report? Would not this be flying in the face of the Lord Jesus, and despising the doctrine which himself hath

92 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

taught, who hath declared regeneration and faith, repentance, and an active coming to him, to be as necessary to salvation instrumentally, as he himself is meritoriously? And tho' it is common for timorous souls to carry their suspicions so far, even beyond the better hope they might justly encourage; yet are we not from hence to call them Pharisees, Legalists, and what not; and to charge them with seeking justification and acceptance with God, by the frames of their own minds, and the actings of their own souls, to the rejecting the free justification, by the alone righteousness of Christ, and being off the foundation of the Gospel-hope, since their sole concern about the above things is, that by knowing and experiencing the truth of them, they might conclude they are in a state of grace, and so enjoy the comfort of being on the right foundation; and that they might not be suffered to satisfy themselves with an unevidenc'd and presumptuous hope; it would certainly be more agreeable to the tenor of the Gospel-peace, and the gracious disposition of our compassionate High Priest, to assure such souls, that the feeling sense they have of sin in the evil of its nature and the greatness of its demerit, the concern they are under on account of it, and the desire they have of being saved from it, by and thro' Christ alone, is grace itself, in the very principle, evidence, and fruit thereof; that they might satisfy themselves that they are born again, without which none
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of these things could be in them, or felt by them : and that they have the very essence of Gospel-faith, which consists in a believing in and sincerely desiring salvation by the Lord alone and in his own way ; they must be shewn that it is to such sin-sensible, weary and heavy-laden souls the Lord Jesus directs himself, and whom as such he invites to come to him, and to whom he promises to give rest : And when declarations of this nature are owned and become the means of satisfaction and comfort to any soul, they cannot but rejoice in those evidences of a divine interest in the Lord Jesus ; in whom they see themselves justified, and in whom alone they glory upon that account : and if these things should be ineffectual to satisfy and comfort the disconsolate mind, it is not all the knowledge they might have of, and faith in the Gospel-revelation that will do it : but the soul must leave his case with the Lord, and live in dependance upon him in hope against hope ; going forward in the use of means, till it shall please the Lord to make his way plain before him, and give him to enjoy the testimonies of his saving love ; nor would it be presumption for such a soul thus to do.

When the ministers of the gospel urge the necessity of regeneration, faith, and repentance, and an active coming to the Lord Jesus ; and recommend an impartial examination concerning the propriety and truth of these things in the soul's own experience ; they are so far from supposing them to have any share
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in justification before God; that they intend them as evidences of their being justified ones, and as the means of comfort and joy upon that account; as also to guard the souls of their hearers from a superficial faith and presumptuous hope. And when the benighted Christian reflects back upon his past experience, in order to support and encourage his faith and hope under clouds and darkness; this is not in the least repugnant to the nature of the gospel, nor can be deemed a rejecting of or flighting the Lord Jesus; since by what means soever the soul seeks to support his faith and hope, and to renew a sensible enjoyment of the divine favour, the Lord Jesus is at the bottom of all, as the sole ground of his faith and hope in the business of justification before God; and he is so far from making his past experience the ground of an objective hope, that he makes it subservient thereto, and uses it as a means to establish his faith and hope in him who is the object thereof, and who he knows is unchangeable tho' sometimes absent: Nor is it contrary to the liberty of the Gospel *for such a soul to go backward to find an absent Lord, any more than it is for him to go forward, or to look on the right hand and on the left.* Job xxiii. 8, 9. And if the church, the bride and spouse of Christ was justifiable in the enquiries she made of the shepherds when they saw him whom her soul loved, and the charge she gave them that when they saw him again, they should tell him she was sick of
4 love,

love, satisfied I am that this Lord and lover of his church will never be displeased with any of his beloved people, when they shall make the same enquiries of themselves, and shall bring to remembrance the time when they saw and enjoyed him their beloved, and shall improve the past manifestations of divine love and grace, as an evidence of their interest in, and inseparable union with him, who having loved his own, loveth to the end. Now, tho' these things might, by some, be deemed legal, yet to me they appear to be a divine living upon the Lord Jesus, by the use of divine and well adapted means; and those who have learned to live upon Christ to the despising of those means, have learned to despise the Gospel-revelation itself, notwithstanding their professed esteem for it, and attempts to exalt it above its own sphere; for the Gospel-revelation is very particular in characterizing those sinners, who without the charge of presumption may hope for salvation through a revealed Jesus; and is as particular in encouraging the benighted Christian to hope and believe from his past experiences, and even puts words into his mouth, Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6, 7. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.* Also Psal. lxxvii. 5,—12. and indeed, the instances are al-

96 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

almost innumerable, wherein the Psalmist excites himself and others to praise and hope in God on account of his past goodness; and tho' some of those instances might refer to what the Lord had done for others, and so not be deemed personal; yet if it be lawful to encourage our faith and hope from the experience of others, much more from our own. Nor can we improve the past testimonies of divine love to such a degree, and for the glory of God as we ought, but by such a use and improvement of the same.

To conclude Sir, suppose the awakened sinner should thro' the great sense he has of his past sin and guilt, and his present feelings of sin and corruption, carry his doubts and fears too far, and be so suspicious as to the Gospel-right he has to hope in a revealed Jesus; and supposing the benighted Christian should likewise be so suspicious of his personal interest in the love and grace of God; and should restrain his satisfaction and comfort so much, either to his past, or present experience of the same; yet since notwithstanding these things, neither of them questions the truth or excellency of the Gospel-revelation, and the sum of both their concern is to be found in Christ, and to enjoy the comfort of their interest in him, by means of the evidences thereof; and since it is allowedly more safe to err on the side of self-suspicion and godly jealousy, than to be too self-confident and presumptuous; I cannot see, that these things,
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taking them in their worst and most extensive light, are any way criminal, or in the least derogatory from the truth and excellency of the gospel-revelation: consequently they are no foundation or cause for unfriendly, severe, and uncharitable reflections and treatment: nor will they warrant or justify the aspersions of legalists, pharisaical, self-righteous, rejecters of the Lord Jesus, and enemies to the free hope of the gospel, &c. much less will they be found sufficient to indemnify under the atrocious sin of schism, in rending the churches of Christ, and perplexing the minds of his dear people about such things as are not in the least essential to church fellowship, or christian unity; and which rather render them the objects of compassion and tender regard, than of evil and unkind usage, in denying them Christian-fellowship as tho' very hereticks: and resettling themselves under the arrogant character of a more spiritual and truly gospelized church, the very purest in *London*, if not in *England**, and whose motto is: *The election hath obtained, and the rest are blinded.*† But Sir, what have they obtained? who have learned to undervalue the workings of divine grace in the hearts of men; yea, who deny the possibility and necessity of implanted grace as previous and necessary to the true knowledge of,

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* This I had from the mouth of one of Mr. P——'s country friends.

† And this I had from the mouth of one of Mr. S—— and Mr. P——'s great admirers, and who almost adores their new scheme of things.

98 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed*

of, and faith in the Lord Jesus, and represent the Gospel-revelation to be self-sufficient to the salvation of sinners, and who make the agency of the divine Spirit subservient to the gospel? What have they obtained who despise the experience and evidences of divine love and grace, as the means of satisfaction and comfort; and recommend a presumptuous faith and hope, without any personal ground for the same? In a word; what have they obtained, who, whilst they attempt to deliver others from legality, are themselves immersed in the very *Jordan* thereof? Witness the above things, together with a neglect of or indifferency to private, or family prayer; also the holy kiss; refusing to take a civil oath; washing the brethrens feet, &c. All which is legal, carnal, and fleshly; the latter of which is irrational and stupid, there being no call for it now, as there was in our Lord's time. Nor was it designed to be a precedent, but only to teach humility and brotherly love: and indeed, if we are to follow the letter of the word without regarding the true intent and meaning of the same (as some with whom I have conversed insist upon) we shall then entangle ourselves with a variety of things which neither Mr. P—— or his followers are aware of, or would be willing to conform to; such as “giving to every one that asketh, and from those who would borrow of us not to turn away; that if compelled to go a mile, to be willing to go twain; and if any one smite us on the one cheek,

cheek, to turn to him the other also; that if sued at the law and lose our coat to give our cloak also; and when any one takes away our goods not to ask for them again:" these and many such like things are the express letter of the word, and equally binding with that of washing one another's feet. We are also told, that "if our right hand offend us to cut it off and cast it from us," and that if our right eye offend us to pluck it out." A conformity to these and such like passages in a literal sense would be a breach of the law of self-preservation, nor would it answer the design of our Lord in the words: on this principle likewise the absurd and impious doctrine of transubstantiation and many other abominable tenets of Rome must needs be embraced, for the letter of the word expressly declares the bread and wine in the ordinance to be the body and blood of Jesus: our Lord also calls himself a door, a vine; but surely to understand these things in a literal sense, would be very ridiculous, yet this is the plan and sum of things which the election hath obtained, and to which the rest are blinded.

From the whole, since it is by the Gospel-revelation, we came by the knowledge of a Saviour, who he is, the Lord Jesus Christ, and how he saves, by the sacrifice of himself, as the meritorious cause, and by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost on the hearts of sinners, as the efficient, meeting, and evidential cause; may you and I,

100 *The FREE GRACE of GOD displayed.*

Sir, be so happy as to receive this Gospel-revelation in a truly evangelical and spiritual sense, may we venerate all its glorious doctrines, experimentally feel its divine power; may we readily embrace, and yield a cheerful obedience to all its precepts, that so by these things we may have the witness in ourselves, and testify to others that we have not received this gospel of the grace of God in vain; but that it has come to us in the saving power of it, in the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance, as well as in the word and letter thereof: this Sir, is the sincere desire of

Your much obliged Friend,

and humble Servant,



Reading:

T. Whitewood.

E R R A T U M.

Page 13. line 30. dele *the defect of the faith.*